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Wm. Murray

BY THE AUTHOR OF DELIA,
AN INTERESTING TALE,
IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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R O S E

A NOVEL

IN FIVE VOLUMES



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R O S I N A.

CHAP. I.

THE NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

THE next day Mr. Fitzosborne, who thought proper to dispel from his brow some of the gloom which had hovered on it the preceding day, resumed with Rosina the disagreeable subject of Mr. Nettleby's addresses. He urged to her, that Mrs. Fitzosborne, in the declaration of yesterday, had been instigated by a sudden glow of transient resentment, not influenced by the unprejudiced dictates of dispassionate consideration; that no rational person could suppose that a wo-

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man of her understanding could be guilty of so unnatural an action as that of disinheriting her only child in favour of a stranger : and that, for his own part, he greatly doubted whether the law would ratify so unjust and unprecedented an alienation of property : that he was not less master of his fortune than Mrs. Fitzosborne was mistress of her's ; and that he was as positively determined as she could be, not to give or leave to his son one single shilling, if he married contrary to his inclinations. " You see (continued he) in what perplexity and distress you are likely to involve this family ; what divisions and dissensions you will probably occasion between a father, a mother, and a son. No one can condemn me for wishing for your absence, and will not my son, on his return, consider you as the bane of his domestic tranquillity, the destroyer of his future prospects, and the usurper of his natural rights ? Or let us even suppose that he should be so insensate as to unite himself to you, in compliance with the whim of a silly and infatuated woman, what would be the inevitable consequence ? The entire loss of my favour and total forfeiture of my estate. Which ever way you turn your eyes, scenes of contention, uneasiness, and strife, arise to your view, and yourself the source they proceed from."

" I see

"I see it, I see it but too plainly ! (said Rosina, deeply afflicted ;) would to heaven——."

"Yet there is a medium, (resumed Fitzosborne) which, if you were generous enough to embrace it, would give peace to this afflicted and distracted household, restore a husband and wife to mutual harmony, and ensure to a son the affection of both his parents."

"What medium ?" said Rosina.

"Marry Nettleby, (returned Fitzosborne.) You, who can expatiate with such pathos on the loveliness of virtue, the beauty of disinterested generosity, you are now brought to the test ; we shall now see whether you can obey the inspirations of that virtue, of which you are so strenuously the advocate, or whether, like other pretended philosophers, you content yourself with uttering heroic maxims, and leave to those who choose it, the more troublesome office of practising them."

Rosina hesitated : she almost began to fancy that she ought to marry Nettleby ; she felt that there was no sacrifice which she was not capable of making to the happiness of her friend, to the resto-

ration of the peace of a family to which she owed so much,—that peace thus interrupted on her own account ; but would her union with a man she detested restore to serenity the friend to whom her happiness was so dear ? The idea was rejected almost as instantaneously as conceived.

They were in the garden. Nettleby had observed them from the windows, and, judging that he had a share in their consultation, thought there could be no impropriety in joining them.

“ Well, (said he, hobbling along, and laughing as he approached them,) well, have you settled that point at last ? Why, you chicken, what could have put that nonsense into that little silly pate of thine, with your presentiments and your prognostications ? ”

“ Sir, (said Rosina,) I fancy we misconceive each other. I understand not what you allude to.”

“ I allude to the silly conceit thou hast got into thy head, that thou and I are never to be married.”

“ Sir ! ” said Rosina, in great astonishment.

“ Ha !

"Ha! ha! how she stares at me! One would think I was triple-headed, like the Cerberus of the ancients. But to resume the seriousness suitable to the occasion. Since our last conversation, I have recollected many other points, in relation to which it may be necessary that I state and explain to you my future expectations; and, in particular, in regard to the nurture and education of the children which may probably be the issue of this marriage."

"Good heaven, Sir! (exclaimed Rosina, har-
rassed on all sides, and irritated past patience,) have I not already told you, in the most explicit terms, that I will never be your wife?"

"How, child! do I understand you aright?"

"One would imagine that it required no peculiar sagacity to comprehend a meaning so directly expressed."

"Beware, Miss Mortimer!" said Fitzosborne, with a menacing frown.

"Of what, Sir? (returned Rosina with spirit :) what measures have I to keep?"

"All this is very odd, very strange! (cried Nettleby;) the most extraordinary thing in the world! When I thought I had nothing to do but to prepare settlements, and fend for the clergyman, now it comes out plump that the young lady will not have me, forsooth!"

"I should yet hope, (said Mr. Fitzosborne,) that Miss Mortimer would alter a resolution that evinces no less folly than obstinacy."

"Never!" said Rosina.

"That is more than you can tell, child, (returned the old gentleman;) never is a long day. But I see how it is with your prognostications and your presentiments. Some infamous jade of a fortune-teller has been setting you agog with her lying predictions, promising you some great, rich, noble, handsome, young, husband, store of fine children, and all the honours and prosperity of this world. Aye, fine talk! it is easy for them to dispense such airy commodities with a liberal hand; they cost them nothing. The abominable vermin! it is a crying sin that our legislature has not provided some adequate measure to sweep such destructive rubbish effectually out of society? —

Wicked

Wicked wretches and profane! to pretend to a prescience which many theological writers deny even to the Divinity himself. I tell you, child, that all pretences to fore-knowledge (except that species of it which is deducible from the conclusions of reason and the evidences of experience,) are equally frivolous and wicked, invented to facilitate the purposes of fraud, by imposing on the weakness of credulity: and even judicial astrology, which was formerly had in such high veneration, and that not many centuries since, is now suffered to sink into the total and contemptuous oblivion it merits."

"There needed not all this rhetoric, Sir, (said Rosina;) on this one point, at least, our sentiments are perfectly agreed."

"Well, I am glad to find that you are not an ideot in all respects. But, as to your saying you will never marry me, I am too well acquainted with the inconstancy and fickleness of womankind, illustrated by so many historical events, and proved to a certainty by daily experience, to place the least reliance on such nonsensical asseverations.—The wisest of men knows that he cannot, at any given period of life, be answerable for the actions

of a future; how then can woman, a creature compounded of whim, caprice, and frivolity, presume to prescribe a boundary to her own roving inclinations! For my own part, I shall not be in the least surprised to find you as eager for the consummation of this marriage to-morrow, as to-day you appear averse to it."

"Very probably she may," said Mr. Fitzosborne, who would have encouraged the old gentleman to persevere in his suit, were it only for the pleasure of seeing Rosina tormented and mortified.

"You see (continued Nettleby) that Mr. Fitzosborne is entirely in my favour: now, if you had one single grain of understanding in your composition, you must necessarily be sensible that, as Mr. Fitzosborne has more than twice your years, and I more than three times, we must consequently possess more than ten times your wisdom, experience, and knowledge of the world. You see I would argue the matter with you coolly and dispassionately. I do not blame you for your folly in not seeing clearly what is for your real advantage; for that, being a natural defect, you are perhaps more to be pitied than censured for it.

What

What I condemn you for is your obstinacy in not consenting to be governed by those, who are infinitely better judges of the means calculated to ensure and promote your happiness and prosperity than you can yourself possibly be."

"Folly and obstinacy (said Mr. Fitzosborne) are twin-sisters, and generally walk hand in hand along the path of life."

"They are so, (replied the old gentleman,) and, sorry I am to say it, this young creature seems to have abandoned herself entirely to their pernicious guidance. But it is a common error, an universal calamity!—like my hopeful nephews. Oh! what a blessed reformation should we behold in life and manners, would the young be but persuaded to renounce all reliance on their own weak judgments, and with a truly filial reverence and simplicity, submit to be implicitly governed by the dictates of age and experience! Then, literally speaking, we should see Paradise regained, then the golden age would flourish once more upon earth!"

"When the blind lead the blind, (said Rosina,) we know the event. If the reason of the
B 5
young

young is obscured by passion, that of the old is no less overshadowed by prejudice ; and which is the most dangerous eclipse I leave to deeper casuists to determine. But, in respect to this marriage, wise as you may think yourself, Sir, you have yet, perhaps, to learn, that a woman may have steadiness to form a decided resolution, and constancy to adhere to it. To you, Sir, (turning to Fitzosborne,) I have but two words to say. Though this wished alliance never can take place, I again repeat it, you shall be ridded of your burden, and without being involved in any one of those inconveniencies you have so minutely enumerated and so ingeniously aggravated. Your favourite end accomplished, the means will be indifferent."

Rosina quitted the room as she spoke.

"A mere little tygress ! (exclaimed Nettleby, observing the indignation that flashed from her eyes, when she addressed Fitzosborne,) by this light, a mere little tygress ! I begin to think I have had a most providential escape. Is this the gentle docile animal you promised me ?"

Such

"Such (replied Fitzosborne) until this hour I ever found her ; but she only verifies the very sensible observations you favoured us with on the inconstancy of the sex."

"Aye, aye, my friend, (returned Nettleby,) they are all of a piece ! all of the same texture, wanton as the winds, uncertain as the seasons ! and to trust the honour and happiness of a man's house, in the keeping of one of them, is no less absurd than to lay its foundation on a sandy beach, nay, on a quaking quagmire. Now I make no doubt but the silly wretch would have been better satisfied if I had proposed one of my nephews to her."

"Indeed, (replied Fitzosborne,) considering her extreme folly and infatuation, it is not at all impossible."

"Well, (replied Nettleby,) Harry Hume promised you to be here against dinner time to day, and she will then have an opportunity of remarking the difference between us."

"Which I dare say she will not fail to do," returned Fitzosborne.

"No, my friend, no. The silly chit will most probably give the preference to that ignorant conceited young puppy, who, as I have already said, though he has the impudence to put on a gown, and ornament his brazen face with a three-tailed wig, knows no more of the law than of his catechism. Well, it cannot be helped; I have had a blessed escape, and to-morrow, or next day, if she should take it into her head to come jumping down my throat, I shall repulse her with the scorn she deserves."

CHAP.

CHAP. II.THE NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

Where there is shame, there may be virtue.

JOHNSON.

ROSINA retired to her apartment. Mrs. Fitzosborne, finding herself that day well enough to leave her room, went to the chamber of her young friend, and surprised her in tears. Imagining, however, that her distress entirely resulted from the conversation of the preceding evening, she soothed her with new professions of tenderness and assurances of protection. Rosina repeated the conversation which had passed between her and her antiquated lover, but entirely suppressed that which she had had with Mr. Fitzosborne. Mrs. Fitzosborne, who was exceedingly amused with

with the singularity of Nettleby's character, determined to go down to dinner, to witness the effect which a disappointment in love would produce on a mind of so very peculiar a stamp. On being summoned to dinner, they found with the gentlemen that Mr. Hume of whom Mr. Nettleby has already favoured the reader with so many descriptions. He was a fashionable-looking young man, in whose appearance Mrs. Fitzosborne or Rosina, to both of whom he was an utter stranger, saw nothing extraordinary.

Mr. Nettleby had in his countenance all the fullness of a rejected lover, though his ill temper manifested itself not in the usual tender languishment of love-lorn swains, but in snapping at his nephew every time he attempted to speak, in execrating modern cookery, and grumbling at every morsel he tasted, (as the reader has doubtless observed some old grim grimalkin, or surly mastiff, to lie growling over its food,) which liberty Mrs. Fitzosborne bore with the utmost good humour.

The young gentleman, who, during the time of dinner, had appeared more occupied in admiring Rosina, than in attending to his uncle, as soon as the desert was removed and the servants withdrawn,

drawn, turned to the latter, and asked him, whether he had heard that his old friend, Mr. Craven, was at length married to the young lady whom he had so long pursued, and by whom he had been so frequently rejected.

“ Aye, aye—I thought what it would come to at last, (said Nettleby.) If a man has but patience, (continued he, casting a spiteful glance at Rosina,) he may have the best of them: but it is paying too good a price for so bad a commodity; and I give him joy of his bargain. I shall greatly marvel if his piece of household stuff does not make him rue the day he ever purchased her. She was no chicken; and when the bloom fades off the plumb, there’s none of them that won’t be glad to jump at a crust.”

“ But such an old mouldy crust as Craven! (said Mr. Hume.) Faith, I think the lady must have a damned sharp matrimonial appetite that could digest him.”

“ You were not feed for your opinion on the case, Mr. Malapert, and there was no necessity for your giving it. Not so mouldy, neither. Dick Craven

Craven and I were at college together: he is not above four or five years my senior."

"Your senior, Mr. Nettleby, (said Mrs. Fitzosborne, determined to irritate him still more,) you surprise me! I always imagined Mr. Craven had been at least eight or ten years younger than you. What could have driven it into his head to marry at such a time of life!"

"The hope of getting an heir to his large fortune, I suppose, (replied Nettleby sharply.) I don't know what else could put it into any man's head to marry at any time of life, for my part? They must be blockheads, indeed, if they can promise themselves any comfort in female society. The Jewish Rabbies had a curious tradition in respect to the sex, which plainly evidenced what estimation they held them in. They maintained, that when God created Adam, he gave him a tail like the brute creatures around him: but that, afterwards observing that this appendage had an incongruity in its appearance, by no means ornamental to the human figure, he took it off, and formed Eve therewith; thereby denoting to their sectaries, that woman ought to be regarded as the very fag-end of the creation, or rather a species of

excrecence on it.—What a blessing would it be, if a man could but contrive to raise up an offspring to himself, without having recourse to them in any shape. I have read some where of our modern philosophers having discovered the secret of making eels with flour and vinegar. I wish they would carry their researches a little farther, and exco-gitate a method of making children out of some substantial materials.”

“ At least, (said Mr. Hume, laughing most immoderately at this curious scheme,) at least you will allow your philosophers to keep their flour and vinegar for the convenience of elderly gentlemen like yourself. For my own part, I am no enemy to the old-fashioned matrimonial scheme; and would give no man any thanks for manufacturing my children for me. And should a bit of this unsocial nature be brought into the House after I get a seat in it ———.”

“ You get a seat in the House! No wonder poor Ireland should go to the devil, when such are the precious senators who enact her laws! A set of little insignificant curs, that keep barking and yelping at the heels of administration, which, in its own defence, is obliged to establish a brokerage of

of pensions, places, and titles, in order to get fops to stop their noisy throats withal! Out upon it! When I was in parliament ——.”

“ When you were, (said Mr. Hume,) you made it a point of conscience to oppose administration, right or wrong.”

“ A man, (returned the old gentleman,) cannot always discern the right from the wrong; and to join the opposition is certainly the safest course.”

“ And what did you get by it? (returned his nephew.) If I give three thousand pounds for a borough, or that it costs me as much to buy the votes and interest of a set of rapacious rascals of freeholders, I think I have a right to expect to be re-paid. What the devil did my country ever do for me, that I should waste my time, and bawl out my lungs in her service, without any expectation of adequate reward? When she thinks proper to recompense my zeal, and buy my services with fifty or sixty thousand pounds, she shall find me as staunch a patriot as ever flung dirt in the face of the ministry. Till then, I am her most obedient.”

“ You

"You are very candid, Sir," said Mrs. Fitzosborne.

"Why, yes. Faith, Madam, whatever may be my faults, hypocrisy is not in the catalogue."

"Perhaps, Sir, (said Mrs. Fitzosborne,) it is so much the worse. Rochfaucault defines hypocrisy to be an exterior homage which vice renders to virtue. But it is the misfortune of the present age to have too little reverence for virtue, to wish even to assume the appearance of it. Notwithstanding the odium with which hypocrisy has been branded, I acknowledge I feel more respect for the young man who wishes to screen his faults and follies from the world, and entertain more hope of his one day renouncing the vices he has sensibility enough to be ashamed of, than for him who blazons them in the face of day, and wears them printed on his brow in characters of unblushing impudence. You may think me severe, Mr. Hume; but my reflections are general, not particular. The levity of youth is entitled to many allowances; but nothing is so fatal to morality as the propensity to level every distinction between good and evil, at present so predominant."

"These

" These barriers, (exclaimed the old gentleman,) have been long since demolished, and are at present in so ruinous a condition, as to be past reparation. The present age! it may justly be styled the brazen age; and posterity will probably represent it under the symbol of a monster with a face of brass, a heart of stone, and a hand of iron. There is no danger, now-a-days, of seeing hypocrites making broad their phylacteries, and praying at the corners of the streets, when a man who is suspected of praying even in his closet, is as much laughed at and derided as if he bowed the knee, in a ridiculous and sinful idolatry, before some graven image. In the present age, the greatest proof a young man of fashion can give of his spirit, is that of flying in the face of his Creator, mocking at his institutions, and setting his vengeance at defiance."

" If we were to consider the matter candidly, (said Mr. Fitzosborne,) I believe it would appear, that the present race of men are not much worse than their progenitors. Opinions and principles are governed, as well as other things, by prevailing modes. It is the nature of the human mind to aspire at distinction: and the same spirit which, in an age of bigotry and enthusiasm, manifested
itself

itself in psalm-singing and long prayers, now breaks out in profaneness and impiety, and launches the dart of irreligious wit."

"Your argument defeats its own purpose, (replied Nettleby,) and proves the very reverse of the proposition it was intended to establish, viz. That the present generation is no more corrupt than the preceding. If a man, to conciliate my esteem and good opinion, assumes an appearance of peculiar sanctity and virtue, does not such hypocrisy presuppose me to be possessed of a high regard and reverence for the virtues of which he puts on the semblance, to secure my approbation; and who, being himself devoid of virtue, will esteem it in others. No, no—argue all you can. Many ages have been bad, but we have lived to see the worst of them, to witness every duty of religion, every moral obligation, every sentiment of patriotic benevolence, ingulphed in one universal sink of profaneness, depravity, and corruption."

Mrs. Fitzosborne left the gentlemen to finish the argument, and retired with Rosina.

CHAP. III.

THE NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

How complicate, how wonderful is Man.

YOUNG.

“**W**HAT a strange creature is man!” (said Mrs. Fitzosborne to Rosina,) and how difficult is the task to separate the good and bad particles of which he seems to be compounded. What a singular combination does the character of this old man exhibit to our observation! How much shrewdness and sagacity appear to be blended with his follies and absurdities! ‘Madness and pertinency mixed,’ as Glo’ster says of Lear. Nature gave him an understanding penetrating and comprehensive, and a capacity to give striking representations of life and manners. You trace in his

portraits

portraits a strong, general resemblance of their originals; but prejudice darkens every shade, and distorts every feature."

The ladies were joined by the gentlemen at tea. Mr. Hume was very pointed in his gallantries to Rosina; and Mrs. Fitzosborne would not have been displeased to have seen her increase the old gentleman's mortification, by flirting a little with his nephew. But Rosina was no coquette; her mind was besides, too much engrossed by its own feelings, to be amused by any thing. She received Mr. Hume's assiduities with the utmost coldness and inattention; and, as soon as she could disengage herself, went alone into the garden, and from thence rambling into the park, she entered a little Gothic temple, built by Mrs. Fitzosborne, and by her devoted to Solitude. As this place was at least a mile from the house, she thought herself secure from every interruption. She threw herself on a seat, opposite the arched door of the temple; and, casting her eyes over the lake that fronted it, whose banks, rising perpendicularly to a considerable height, were covered with large trees, that hung waving over the water with a gloomy solemnity, she experienced for an interval that torpid suspension of thought which often succeeds to the per-

perturbation of an agonized spirit. But soon starting as from a dream, her promise to Fitzosborne darted across her imagination; and bursting into a violent flood of tears, exclaimed aloud,—

“Yes, I must go! But whither? without friends, without money.”

She put her handkerchief to her eyes. Hearing a little noise, she looked up, and beheld a man at her feet; but it was Austin, the poor old Austin, who for the last two days had kept a watchful eye on her; and this evening, when she passed through the garden, his heart was torn by the unusual disquietude and dejection he observed in her air, and he determined to follow her, to entreat her confidence, and, if necessary, offer her assistance.

“Oh, my dear young lady! (cried he, dropping on his knees, whilst the tears streamed down his white beard as he spoke,) forgive the boldness of your old faithful servant. But how could I help it! Have I not seen you these two days with your heart a breaking; and just now, as I stood at the door, I heard you say something about going some where, and that you had neither friends nor money. To be sure, (continued he, sobbing,) I know

R O S I N A.

I know the likes of me is not fit to be the friend of such a fine young lady as you. But in regard to money, I have a matter of two hundred pound; and if that will do you any good, and that you will take it from your poor old man, why sure, if I come to want it hereafter, you may pay me when you are married to some great gentleman or other. And, for matter of that, it is only taking your own a little before the time; for, having neither chick nor child of my own, and having so often dandled you on my knees, and slept with you in my bosom, I thought I had a kind of a sort of right, somehow, to feel for you as if you were my own flesh and blood; and so I made bold to make my will, and leave my little rakings and scrapings to you; and here it is, (continued he,) rummaging in his pockets, and pulling out a piece of greatly folded paper,) I got Justice Dowdle's clerk to draw it out for me. And if it be a thing that you must go away out of this, there's no part of the world I won't follow you to, if you will but let me."

O, ye, who can venerate the sacred form of virtue, even when unadorned by any artificial embellishments; when, with the wild sweetness of the mountain flower, she appears in her native simplicity, her uncultivated loveliness; conceive, for

ye only can conceive, the effect which this generous and pathetic address produced on the grateful and sympathetic bosom of Rosina! It forcibly expressed the emotions of a noble, affectionate, and delicate mind; and all the graces of oratory could have added nothing to its pathos. Accustomed from her infancy to behold the world stripped of that veil of prejudice which few are taught to penetrate, Rosina's reason refused to consider in the light of an inferior the man who had evinced himself capable of such exalted generosity, such heroic attachment! The cold dictates of prudence were forgotten in that moment of grateful sensibility; she flung her arms round him in a passion of tenderness.

“And you are, you are my father! (cried Rosina,) and my friend! My soul reveres you, my heart acknowledges you! Away, then, with those narrow distinctions, first invented by pride, and perpetuated by folly! Yes, Austin, you shall be my friend and my protector; and if I want your money, I will apply it as my own.”

The old man sobbed with joy, whilst she leaned with one arm fondly thrown over him, and with her other hand she wiped away with her own handkerchief

kerchief the tears that flowed from his eyes. At this moment her little dog, which had followed her from the house, and who, during this tender scene, had slept quietly at the foot of his mistress, starting from its slumber, flew, barking, towards the door, where Rosina, raising her eyes, beheld with inexpressible consternation Mr. Nettleby and Mr. Hume, who on their part appeared no less petrified with amazement with the spectacle which presented itself to their view; nor was their astonishment in the least diminished when Austin, turning suddenly towards them, displayed his hoary locks, white beard, and furrowed face; for Austin was seventy-three, and had a mien, a person, and a sweet complacency of countenance, that might have done honour to the cell of a sainted anchorite. He arose in great confusion; and, wiping his eyes with his blue apron, sneaked away in as great dismay as if he had been detected in the commission of some sinful action.

As Austin quitted the temple, Mr. Fitzosborne, who had happened to be a little behind his companions, entered it, and observing the surprise of the gentlemen, and Rosina's embarrassment, demanded an explanation by the looks he cast around him.

“ O, nothing ! (said the old gentleman, replying to this silent interrogation,) nothing at all but a very curious discovery we have made. O, woman, woman ! he who wrote the tale of the Ephesian Matron, pourtrayed thee to a tittle ! Yet, what pen can trace thee through the involutions and labyrinths of thy pride, thy folly, thy wantonness, and thy hypocrisy ! Behold this creature before us. Were a painter desirous of representing the lovely graces of innocence, modesty, and sensibility, might he not catch his colours from the blushes that mantle on her cheeks at this instant ; and yet my own glow, whilst I yet speak, at the recollection of the scene I have been witness to !”

“ What scene ! (cried Fitzosborne eagerly, exulting in the hope, that the opportunity he has so long vainly wished for, of blasting the reputation of the person he hated, was at length arrived,) what scene were you witness to ?”

“ Faith, a very curious one,” said Mr. Hume.

“ A scene of a most atrocious nature, (replied Nettleby.) We absolutely beheld her with her arms encircling the neck of her paramour !”

“ Thou

"Thou wretched girl!" said Fitzosborne.

"And such a paramour! (continued Nettleby,) a menial wretch, a vile despicable hireling! Ah, now, and not till now, was I thoroughly sensible of the signal and notable deliverance I have had. Had I married the wanton, what would have been my disgrace and ignominy! For vice, as Shakespeare says,

"For vice, though to a radiant angel link'd,

"Will fate itself in a celestial bed,

"And prey on garbage."

"You astonish me, (said Fitzosborne.) Pray explain this horrible mystery."

"Did you see the man that passed you as you entered?"

"No, (said Fitzosborne, never recollecting so common a circumstance as meeting old Austin,) I met no man."

"You met no man! This is very strange; it appears like witchcraft. An aged, hoary dotard. As I am a living man, I saw her arms about his neck."

"I could have wished it had been a halter," said Mr. Hume.

"What man? (repeated Fitzosborne eagerly.) Who was it?"

"Old Austin," said Rosina, lifting her eyes with a contemptuous smile.

"Old Austin! (repeated Nettleby,) aye, he it was: the villainous grey-beard that works in your garden. There must have been some strange arts of seduction practised, some fascinating drugs or philters exhibited."

"Old Austin! (said Fitzosborne in a tone of disappointment, for he was well aware that it would be utterly impossible to fix a stigma of so ridiculous a nature on the conduct of Rosina.) Old Austin, absurd!"

"You may say what you please; but people cannot discredit the evidence of their own eyesight," returned Nettleby.

"Our laws, however, (said Mr. Hume,) do not condemn unheard. It is just, that we listen

to

to what our fair defendant may have to alledge in her vindication;" advancing towards her as he spoke with an air of greater confidence than he had till then assumed, and attempting to take her hand.

Rosina turning disdainfully from him, arose and quitted the temple, without uttering a sentence: but there was a dignity in her silence which plainly evinced that she thought the accusation brought against her of a nature too ridiculous to merit refutation; so, at least, Fitzosborne and Hume interpreted it; but the old gentleman gave it a different construction.

" See, (cried he,) the creature has not one word to alledge in her own behalf."

" It is very extraordinary, I must acknowledge, (said Hume;) but I confess I can never believe that the old fellow received those tender caresses on his own account. I should rather suspect him to be the Mercury of some younger and more favoured lover."

" A very probable conjecture," said Fitzosborne.

" I think it is a very absurd one, (cried Nettleby.) If the girl has shewn judgment in any thing, it is in fixing her affections on a person who is arrived at a time of life when men begin to be steady and know their own minds."

" But, my dear uncle, (said Hume,) from what you have just now dropped, I find you were yourself the rival of this captivating old gardener. I am amazed you did not make me the confidante of your tender passion; a passion which must meet the approbation of every person of common understanding."

" Your raillery is extremely impertinent, Sir, (returned the old gentleman.) I despise from my soul the approbation, as well as the censure, of all those whom you call men of understanding; a distinction which, I suppose, you allow to none but saucy, impertinent cubs like yourself."

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.THE NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

Il ne suffit pas à une femme vertueuse de ne rien faire que du bien ; il faut encore qu'elle ne fasse rien qui ne soit approuvé.

ROUSSEAU.

ROSINA, at her return to the house, had forbore to speak to Mrs. Fitzosborne of this vexatious adventure, as the repetition of her conversation with Austin must have led to explanations utterly inconsistent with the plan she began to meditate.

“ Mr. Fitzosborne, at his return, proposed a party of piquet, in the view of amusing the old gentleman, and dissipating his chagrin. Mr. Hume

had cut out, and Mrs. Fitzosborne was seated with the other gentlemen at the card-table, when Rosina, who judged that her absenting herself from the company, might be imputed to a consciousness of the impropriety of her conduct, returned to the drawing-room. Her resentment had raised her spirits from the dejection by which they had been depressed the preceding part of the day. She entered the room with more than usual dignity of carriage, and animation of countenance. She seated herself at her netting, when Hume, to whom she appeared more beautiful and elegant than ever, approached her with an air of gay familiarity; and throwing himself on a chair beside her,—

“ I have been praying all the evening for age and wrinkles, Miss Mortimer, (said he;) and, with Rosalind in *As You Like It*, have been entreating Jupiter to send me a commodity of hair, (stroking his chin as he spoke;) but it must be long and white to render me amiable in your eyes; a motive which would induce me to undergo as many transformations as Jove himself. I would be impetuous as a bull, fierce as the thunderbolt, and woo my lovely Danæ in a shower of gold,” seizing her hand and kissing it as he spoke.

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"You must, indeed, Mr. Hume, (said Rosina, angrily withdrawing her hand,) you must indeed, undergo a total transformation before you can appear to advantage in my eyes. But white hairs and wrinkles, when found connected with impertinence and presumption, do but expose their possessor to greater ridicule and contempt."

"Ha! severe enough, faith. You have learned that of Mrs. Fitzosborne. But, for mercy's sake, for though I know you will think the question impertinent, I cannot forbear enquiring; do tell me what motive could induce you to lavish such tender caresses on that old grey-beard of a gardener? I never felt so violent a transport of envy in my life. I could scarcely refrain from cutting the dog's throat."

"I am not accountable to you, Sir, for my motives, (returned Rosina;) motives, which, perhaps, were I to attempt to explain them to you, you might not understand. Whilst my conduct appears blameless in my own eyes, I shall not greatly concern myself about the misinterpretations of mistaken and misjudging people."

"You are of opinion then, (said Mr. Hume with more gravity,) that when a young lady is conscious of the propriety of her own actions, she may view with contempt the censures of the world."

"Indeed I am not, (said Rosina.) Every woman who has any feeling will wish to preserve a fair and unblemished reputation. It was perhaps a blameable pride that prevented me from entering into any vindication of my conduct, at the moment when I am conscious it might have merited reprehension; for there are certain limits prescribed by decorum, which we should never suffer our feelings to lead us to exceed.—That old man was the husband of my nurse, and has been from my infancy strongly attached to me. At the moment when you surprised us, he gave me an instance of the fondest paternal affection. I have never known any other father, (continued Rosina, wiping away a tear that started from her eye,) and forgot for a moment that he was not such in reality."

She arose as she spoke, and left the young gentleman fully impressed with a conviction which her pride wished him to feel, that her having condescended to this justification of her conduct, was

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a sacrifice to propriety, not made with any view to retrieve his good opinion, or conciliate his esteem.

Mrs. Fitzosborne retired soon afterwards; and the ladies saw the gentlemen no more for the remainder of the evening.

After supper, Mr. Hume resumed the subject of his uncle's courtship, and made him many ironical compliments on the goodness of his taste, which the old gentleman returned in his usual style of acrimonious recrimination.

"I have a great fancy, Counsellor, (said Fitzosborne,) that your nephew has an inclination to become your rival. You see he can speak or think of nothing but Rosina Mortimer."

"With all my heart, (cried Nettleby,) I wo'n't dispute the prize with him. It is a pity so well matched a pair should be separated."

These expressions, inadvertent and unmeaning on both sides, instantly suggested a new plan to the fertile imagination of Fitzosborne. To get Rosina off his hands, by any means, before the
return

return of his son, was a point on which he had fixed his heart; but now utterly despairing of being rid of his burden by the uncle, his views instantly directed themselves towards the nephew. Every one who attends ever so little to what passes in his own mind, must have remarked the amazing rapidity of the operations of thought, with what astonishing velocity this busy principle examines, compares, rejects, and decides. Before the old gentleman had time to finish his speech, the probable consequences of a whole train of arguments had been weighed and considered in the brain of Fitzosborne.

“ They are a well-matched pair, indeed, (repeated Nettleby.) I was astonished at her effrontery just now, when I saw her enter the room with as much calmness and self-possession as if nothing had happened !”

“ Dear Sir, (cried Fitzosborne, who on a sudden was become as zealous to vindicate the conduct of Rosina, as, three hours before, he had been solicitous to asperse and stigmatize it,) my dear Sir, how can you suffer yourself to be influenced by so silly a conceit? Rosina has from childhood been accustomed to the caresses and endearments
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of that old man, who was her foster-father. I have kept him in my family merely on account of his uncommon attachment to her. I took her pretty severely to task to-day for her treatment of you. You might have observed that she was exceedingly dejected. I suppose the old man found her in tears; and thus originated the silly scene to which you were witness. The poor old soul is almost doating; every one treats him with familiarity, to which he is doubly entitled, because, though latterly greatly reduced, his birth and education were very respectable."

These last circumstances were ingeniously invented by Fitzosborne, to mitigate Rosina's apparent culpability; for Austin had neither experienced any reverse of fortune, nor enjoyed any advantage of education.

"Well, may be so, (said Nettleby,) may be so. Appearances, I allow, may deceive: we are not always to rely on them implicitly, without attending to the testimony of other evidence. But, however the matter may stand, I am heartily rejoiced that I have kept my throttle out of the matrimonial noose; for, all casualties and contingencies well reflected on and considered, it is much safer and

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wiser

wiser to steer our little bark through the hazardous and tempestuous ocean of human life, without being burdened with so precarious and troublesome a lading as a wife. So, my good friend, though the girl may be a very innocent girl, for much reliance I acknowledge is to be had on your testimony, yet if she should chance to repent of her folly in refusing me, as may very probably happen one of these days, don't suffer her to flatter herself with the hope of being able to shake my resolves, for they are absolutely and irrevocably fixed."

"Alas! (said Hume,) how my heart bleeds for the beautiful Rosina! Dear Sir, you will drive the ill-starred fair-one to the dreadful resolution of having recourse to her garters!"

"None of your humbugging, Sir,) returned the old gentleman;) she would be much more likely to be driven to such an expedient, if she was married to some impertinent, worthless, hair-brained, good-for-nothing scape-grace, like yourself."

"Suppose we try the experiment, Mr. Hume, (said Fitzosborne.) I think the nephew ought to endeavour

endeavour to console the lady for the cruelty of the uncle."

"Why faith, Sir, (said Hume,) I did hazard a few gallantries; but they were received with the most frigifying indifference."

"I begin to think better of the girl," said Nettleby.

"Then suppose, (said Fitzosborne,) you come into my plan, and transfer your pretensions to your nephew."

"With all my heart. If he does not do this, he will probably play some other prank in the matrimonial way every whit as absurd; nay, a great deal more so."

"You said just now, Sir, (resumed Fitzosborne,) that Mr. Hume and Rosina were well matched: but you were not aware how very high a compliment you paid the gentleman." And he launched out into a florid panegyric on Rosina's character and manners.

Hume,

Hume, who was not deficient in discernment, now perceived that Fitzosborne was more serious in this conversation than he had at first imagined him to be, and instantly conceived that he was spreading a snare for him, which he determined to keep clear of. He had heard in general terms that Rosina had no fortune, and instantly conjectured that Fitzosborne wanted to inspire him with such an attachment to her as might induce him to take her off his hands, and thus save himself the expence of her future maintenance and provision. Such a scheme was perfectly consistent with the idea he had formed of Fitzosborne's character; but he was rather surprised and piqued, that he should suppose him so stupid a gull as to be caught in a trap concealed with so little attention. He answered, looking down and twirling the seals which hung to his watch-chain as he spoke, "That he doubted not the young lady merited all the encomiums Mr. Fitzosborne had lavished on her; that no man felt a stronger admiration for beauty than himself; but that *all for love* was not his motto: that he was one of those unfortunate men who are constrained, by the narrowness of their circumstances, to put a force on the wishes of their hearts; and that really at five-and-twenty it was early enough to think of matrimonial

rimonial connections, which might usually be formed to much greater advantage after a man had arrived at some degree of eminence in his profession. If I were in my uncle's predicament, (continued he,) and could afford to marry without a fortune ——,"

"Your uncle marry without a fortune! (exclaimed Nettleby.) Dost take thy uncle for an idiot! If ever I had any silly notions of the girl, it was her fortune that put them into my head. Marry without a fortune, quotha!"

"What, (said Hume, dropping the seals from his fingers, and looking up with great earnestness of attention,) has Miss Mortimer then a fortune?"

Mr. Fitzosborne then explained to him Rosina's situation in respect to her law-suit; to which the young gentleman, after listening with great attention to all the circumstances, replied, That his uncle was in a situation to run risques of that nature: but for his own part, he was too well acquainted with the precariousness of the law, to build his hopes of fortune on so slippery a foundation; and added, that a law-suit was a damned bad portion for a man to get with a wife."

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"As bad as you may think it, (replied Nettleby,) it would have amply contented me; and I think I may without vanity set up my judgment in competition with that of your worship, who knows no more of the law than your horse does. But such is the folly, ignorance, and conceit of the present generation! It is a strange thing that young people wo'n't suffer themselves to be guided by those who are qualified by their years and experience for the difficult office of advisers and directors."

"It would be much stranger if they would," said Hume.

"Why can't you take example by me? (continued Nettleby.) I never was arrogant or self-opinionated, but always willing to yield my own judgment, when it opposed that of a person whom I knew to be wiser than myself."

"And when or where did you encounter such a phoenix?" said Hume ironically.

"I tell you, puppy, (resumed the old gentleman,) that I am so well satisfied of the event of the law-suit in question, that I would willingly
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stake one half of my property on the success of it. And if you marry the girl, I will give you three thousand pounds, on condition that you bind yourself in articles to give me four on the recovery of the cause. Nay, I will, moreover, be conducting lawyer; and in case we are non-suited, will demand no payment for my trouble."

Mr. Hume, who knew his uncle was no jester, and who, besides, entertained great respect for his judgment and abilities when confined within the limits of his profession, began to waver in his opinion.

"And pray, (said he,) what may be the value of the estate?"

"It was originally three hundred a-year," said Fitzosborne.

"Aye, (said the old gentleman;) but as sure as I have a head upon my shoulders, I will make them refund every penny of the issues and profits arising from said lands and hereditaments during the fifty-three years of which the defendant has kept unlawful possession of them, besides costs. Do you think, blockhead, that if I meant to run
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my neck into the matrimonial halter, it was for nothing! Since I cannot venture to give myself a legal title to these lands and monies, it will be some consolation to me, to think that they are not to go out of my family; and that I shall stand, as it were, in a sort of relationship to them. But I protest, pulling out his watch, it is almost twelve o'clock. This is another of the vile perversions of the present generation. But they are in the right to conceal their debaucheries from the fair face of day: the darkest hours of midnight are not black enough for the orgies they celebrate; and I believe in my soul, the present atrocious custom of turning night into day, first originated from that principle of shame which Providence implanted in the human mind for purposes far better. Lust and rapine, fraud and murder, (continued he, rising and taking a light as he spoke,) affect the dreadful gloom of midnight, and prowl amidst the shades, when sleeping nature (walking towards the door and opening it) seems dark and horrible as the infernal purposes that brood ——." He went out, and shut the door, but not his lips, which continued to pour forth the effusions of his oratory as he walked up stairs to his own chamber; nor were his harangues quite finished when his servant had drawn the curtain, and tucked in the cloaths at his back.

C H A P.

CHAP. V.THE NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

If sordid motives rule the heart,
In vain poor Love may launch his dart ;
When Av'rice spreads her sev'nfold shield,
The vanquish'd god must quit the field.

THE gentlemen, after having laughed a little at Nettleby's oddities, returned to the more interesting subject that had before engaged their attention: and Hume, now beginning to behold the matter in a more serious light, thanked Fitzosborne for having suggested this plan to him, and earnestly entreated his mediation with Rosina. Fitzosborne advised him to be slow and cautious in his approaches; but above all things, to conceal his operations from the observation of Mrs. Fitzosborne,

osborne, who, he hinted, had different views for Miss Mortimer, to whom she was partial, even to weakness. But as he conceived the plans she had formed could never be realized, he said, he thought he should amply fulfil his duty to Rosina, by promoting her marriage with a gentleman whose profession so peculiarly adapted him to retrieve the rights of her birth; and whose personal qualities ensured her an agreeable and eligible union.

Mr. Hume made many professions of gratitude; and now very warmly expatiated on the charms of Rosina, with whose person he had in reality been exceedingly captivated. After having conversed near two hours, the gentlemen separated, very much satisfied with each other, and with the success that seemed likely to attend their respective plans: for, coldly as Rosina had treated Mr. Hume, he had too good an opinion of himself to doubt of engaging her affection, when he should convince her that she was the object of his serious pursuit: and it had been previously agreed between him and Mr. Fitzosborne, that, in order to give greater weight to the passion he was from the next morning to begin to manifest, not one word should be dropped that could lead her to suspect him of any interested view, or even to imagine he had ever
heard

heard a syllable of the fortune to which she was entitled. It was also agreed, that Hume should accept the three thousand pounds on the terms offered by his uncle; who, on his part, had gone to sleep, indulging himself in the agreeable reflection, that he should not only pocket a neat thousand pounds, but also have the pleasure of conducting a successful suit; for, by the force of long habit, he had contracted a considerable fondness for his profession, and found the same keen delight in circumventing the manœuvres, and tracing the windings of chicane, which is experienced by an old sagacious hound when he unearths a fox, or traces a hare through its turnings and doublings.

Mr. Hume retired to his apartment, with his head, and he fancied his heart too, full of Rosina. He slept not one wink, and, before morning, had almost persuaded himself that it was his growing passion for that young lady which had kept him waking: though it is more than probable, that, had no ambitious plan been suggested to his imagination, Rosina, with all her charms, would not have been able to deprive him of one moment's repose.

Mr. Fitzosborne was not less satisfied with the meditated alliance than either of his guests. To Rosina, abstracted from her interference with his favourite plans, he had no violent aversion; and would have been rather better satisfied to procure her absence from his family by decent, and seemingly honourable means, than to effect the same point by illicit artifice. He knew that her heart was inexperienced, susceptible, full of ideas of romantic generosity and tenderness; and he fancied it could scarcely escape the snare which the apparently disinterested attachment of a man, young and agreeable as Hume, was to spread for its affection.

Far different were the midnight reveries of the poor Rosina, who steeped her pillow, meantime, in the tears of uncertainty and anguish. Determined to leave the house of the person by whom she was persecuted and hated, and equally determined not to involve in any disagreeable consequence that protectress to whom she owed more than filial obligation, and for whose happiness she felt more than filial solicitude, she resolved to withdraw herself privately, with the assistance of old Austin, whom she determined to make, not only the confidante, but the companion of her flight; and with him

him to seclude herself in some solitude, where she might pass her time in privacy and retirement, until the marriage of young Fitzosborne, or some other favourable circumstance, might enable her to leave it with propriety. There was something heroic in this meditated sacrifice to friendship and generosity that was flattering to the ambition of a young mind; and she exulted with a fond enthusiasm in the idea of proving to Mrs. Fitzosborne, that she had not lavished her tenderness on an ungrateful and unworthy object. But, for the execution of this plan, money was absolutely necessary; and Rosina, "open as Heaven to melting charity," had so liberally distributed the money with which she had been as liberally supplied by her friend, that she was not possessed of five guineas in the world. It is true, she had many valuable toys and trinkets; but she knew, that when things of this kind are disposed of at second hand, they produce a very inconsiderable price, and she determined that, notwithstanding what she had uttered in the first emotion of her surprise and tenderness, no necessity should oblige her to have recourse to Austin's purse, or suffer him to risque, on her account, the little pittance he had saved for the support of his age. She knew that she was entitled to a few hundred pounds, the wreck of

her father's fortune; but she also knew, that, without Mrs. Fitzosborne's knowledge, she could not command one shilling of it; and to suffer that lady to conceive the least suspicion of her plan, would utterly defeat it. One, and only one expedient remained; but that was of a nature so disagreeable, that she could not determine to embrace it. She knew Mr. Fitzosborne would most readily supply her with any money she might want to effect a purpose so very near his heart, as her removal from his family before the return of his son; but her pride refused to solicit what even wore the appearance of an obligation from him who was the object of her deepest resentment. The morning found her bewildered in these reflections, and still undecided and embarrassed.

Mr. Hume, in pursuance of the plan of the preceding evening, began his operations the very next morning. He entirely laid aside the forward levity of manners which had so greatly disgusted Rosina on the day before, and approached her with all the respectful assiduity of a serious lover: but whether it was, that this assumed character sat awkwardly on him, or that Rosina was too much engrossed by her own painful feelings, to pay much attention to his gallantries, certain it is, they made so little impression

impression on her mind, that she took not even the trouble of examining what source they might proceed from. Mr. Hume, though somewhat disgusted with her coldness, still flattered himself it was the result of misapprehension, and fancied, that when she should be convinced of being the object of his serious attachment, his addresses would meet a very different reception; and, consistently with this idea, after having sighed and ogled about eight days, a preparation he thought very sufficient, he determined to hazard a more unequivocal avowal of his tenderness; and, in this intention, he one morning traced her to that very temple where he and his uncle had before surprised her.

Rosina had wandered out with a book; but her thoughts were too much occupied by the distresses of her own situation, to attend to any foreign subject; and though her eyes strayed over the lines, her ideas were too wild and unconnected to be fixed by their import. The book dropped from her hand.

"You are so much the votary of solitude, Miss Mortimer, (said Hume, as he entered the temple,) that I fear you will not be easily persuaded to pardon this intrusion."

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"Most readily, (said Rosina, smiling;) though I profess myself the Priestess of this Divinity, I have no exclusive right to offer incense in this temple, devoted to her worship, and will therefore leave you to your devotions." She arose as she spoke.

"Hold, (said Hume, catching her hand with an air of gaiety,) as the Priestess of the Goddess, you must officiate at her altar, present our sacrifices, and instruct us how to make them. I confess I am but a novice in the business, and require your good offices as a mediatrix to reconcile me to this deity, whom, notwithstanding all the fine things that have been said of her, both by ancients and moderns, I have hitherto very much despised and neglected. But if you, Miss Mortimer, will condescend to assist my devotions, I will promise to become the most zealous of her votaries, and worship the goddess in spirit and in truth."

"As the Priestess of the Deity, (said Rosina,) I must again inform you, you must offer your incense, and await her inspirations, in solitary loneliness.—So, adieu."

"Solitary

“ Solitary loneliness ! (repeated Hume :) there is something frigifying in the idea ! No, faith, nature never formed me for the cell of a hermit. I have too much philanthropy, and I love mankind too well, to wish to banish myself from their dwellings, and exchange their intercourse for that of the sentimental owls and bats which compose the train of this *sombre* Divinity. Or if I was destined to fix my residence in a desert, I would take at least some fair and sociable companion to animate its glooms : and if my wishes might be accomplished, that companion should be ———. Shall I dare to name her ? ”

“ You may possibly have some reason, Sir, (said Rosina coldly,) for wishing to conceal the name of your favourite ; and I can certainly have none for desiring to be acquainted with it. We will therefore separate, if you please.”

“ Miss Mortimer, (said Hume with more seriousness,) I doubt you mistake my character. You may think me, like too many other young men, light, volatile, and incapable of real attachment ; but ———.”

"Indeed, Mr. Hume, (interrupted Rosina,) these are subjects on which I have never reflected, as the turn of your character was never likely to be of any consequence to me. You cannot wonder that I should have never taken any pains to develope it"

"But, (replied Hume,) will you still continue to think it a subject so very insignificant, when you find it no less strongly marked by liberality of sentiment, than by constancy of attachment; when you are assured, that the heart which offers itself to your acceptance, never harboured any views but the most serious and honourable?"

"Honourable views, Mr. Hume! Who ever suspected you of conceiving any other?"

"And no less disinterested than honourable, (pursued Hume.) It is true, my fortune is at present small; but I have good expectations: such as it is, I have no ambition but to share it with you. I have reason to flatter myself, that Mr. Fitzosborne esteems me, and will give a sanction to my pretensions."

Rosina,

Rosina, exceedingly surprised at this, very unexpected declaration, continued silent and embarrassed.

"It is true, (continued Hume, wishing to give his passion still greater merit in the eyes of Rosina,) it is true, I have reason to apprehend that my uncle's most serious displeasure will be the consequence of this attachment: but when my affections are fixed on an object so lovely; when the whole happiness of my future life is at stake ——"

"Mr. Hume, (interrupted Rosina, recovering from her first surprise and embarrassment,) no man shall ever suffer from a generous prepossession in my favour. I will never render myself liable to the painful consciousness of having repaid attachment with injury. The dread of the consequences of your uncle's displeasure, would be a sufficient motive to deter me from entering into any engagements with you, had I no other."

"It is true, (said Hume, fearing he had overshoot his mark,) my uncle has great oddities: but, notwithstanding his contemptuous manner of treating me, I have reason to believe that he is greatly interested in my happiness; and when he is con-

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vinced that it is absolutely dependent on this union, his avarice will yield to his affection for me.—On condition that he should be brought to consent to my wishes, will you promise me that you will not oppose them ?”

Rosina hesitated in doubt and confusion; and Hume imagined he had prevailed. All the difficulties and distresses of her situation presented themselves at one view to her imagination. Could she doubt the reality of an attachment so apparently disinterested? She had never heard any thing to the disadvantage of Mr. Hume’s character; his person was agreeable, and his manners genteel; his expectations, if his uncle consented to this marriage, were undoubtedly very good; every reasonable consideration seemed to weigh in favour of this union;—if she rejected it, what was the alternative? A clandestine elopement, which must necessarily subject her to numberless inconveniences and disadvantages, and from which, consequences the most disagreeable might result. Yet, spite of every motive which might incline her to encourage Mr. Hume’s addresses, the more powerful impulses of her heart still over-ruled the suggestions of her reason. She felt that she did not, and she fancied that she never should, love him.

Hume, meantime, interpreting her silence in his favour, uttered the most flattering professions of tenderness and admiration, interspersed with as many vows of unabating affection and unshaken constancy as he thought necessary to the occasion, and pressed with much ardour to know her decision.

“ On a point of so great consequence, (said Rosina,) you cannot be surprised if I should refuse to decide until I shall have had leisure for reflection. To-morrow you shall know my determination.”

“ Meantime, (said Hume with great eagerness,) I must make one condition: Will you promise me not to mention our conversation to Mrs. Fitzosborne?”

“ Be assured I meant it not, (said Rosina, who fancied Hume had received some hint of her friend’s intentions in respect to her son;) and now, adieu.”

Hume followed her; and, with the assurance of a lover who fancies himself favoured, took her hand, and would have put it through his arm as they walked; but she coldly withdrew it, and insisted on his leaving her; to which, after many complaints and remonstrances, he consented.

 CHAP. VI.

THE NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

ROSINA returned to the house in a greater agitation of spirits than she had yet experienced ; and, not withstanding her disinclination to Hume, was strongly tempted to embrace the only expedient which seemed reconcilable with propriety, to extricate herself from the embarrassments of her situation. Mrs. Fitzosborne abruptly entered her dressing-room, and found her in tears.

“O my sweet Rosina ! (cried she, embracing her with fervour,) what, still in tears ! Am I doomed never more to see those soft enchanting smiles of vivacity and joy, which have so often soothed my vexations, and animated my gloomiest
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hours? Come, come, what a fool you are! wipe away your tears; a few more struggles, and we shall be the happiest of human beings: and is it not virtue to struggle against oppression? I have made a curious discovery, that will amuse you at least, if it leads to nothing better; but I hope it will."

"Hope! (said Rosina, again dissolving into tears,) hope is not for me!"

"Yes, my Rosina, (said Mrs. Fitzosborne,) it is, and it shall be for you,—hope, of all blessings the most blessed! The fabulist was a fool who writ her name amongst the catalogue of human miseries, and confined her with them to the box of Pandora; but she knew her own destination better, and refused to enter the world in such bad society. Let not the gloomy and mistaken moralist persuade you to renounce this best friend to humanity. Riches and honours may throw a transitory lustre over the present scene, but, deprived of the illuminations of hope, the future must hang lowering in a dreadful and desponding gloom. Come, then, my Rosina, we will together pay homage to this sweet enthusiast; for where should she shower her roses, if not in the paths

paths of innocence, loveliness, and goodness, such as your's !—But to my tale. Can you guess the motive which influenced the addresses of your ancient lover ?”

“ I know no particular motive to attribute them to,” said Rosina.

“ Some time since, without your knowledge, (resumed Mrs. Fitzosborne,) I put into his hands the papers relative to that unfortunate law-suit, in which the interests of your family have been so long involved.”

“ Indeed, (said Rosina,) I think you are too implicitly the votary of hope, if you still suffer her to flatter you with an illusion that has been so fatal to my family. When I consider her as the origin of all those unfortunate suits which desolate the fortunes and destroy the peace of so great a number of mankind, I am almost tempted to wish that she had never left her old residence in Pandora's casket ; for, without hope, there would be no law-suits, and, were I now possessed of the money that has been lavished on that unlucky cause, I should be opulent.”

“ No

"No matter, (said Mrs. Fitzosborne ;) fortune is in your debt, and sooner or later will settle her account with you. On Nettleby's arrival here, I enquired his opinion of the case, but he gave me evasive answers, and told me I was too ill, and my nerves too weak to be talked to on business at that period; and, knowing the whimsical obstinacy of his humour, I was obliged to give way to it. This morning, however, I again pressed to know his opinion; and, though he expressed it in terms the most equivocal, and involved it in abundance of law phrases, to me inexplicable, I could easily discover that it was very favourable. "If I had married the girl myself," said he, "with much expence and difficulty, I might have been enabled, by my own knowledge and unremitting assiduity, to make something of it; but I am too far advanced in life to purchase into lotteries of this nature. However, if you will be advised by me, you will try to get the child married to some young man bred to the law, who, having but a small dependence of his own, may find it worth his while to engage in the business. There is my nephew, Harry Hume, for instance; but the misfortune of it is, that the fellow has so good an opinion of himself, that he will expect to get as good a fortune any hour of the

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the day without the trouble of going to law for it; and, indeed, now-a-days, there are so many rich old spinsters and jointured widows ready to snap up every young fellow of a tolerable appearance, that it makes them all as conceited as the devil." Indeed, Rosina, (continued Mrs. Fitzosborne,) if I am not very deficient in penetration, this sly old Renard has a design on you, or rather on your fortune, for his nephew, and I think the young gentleman has been rather particular to you of late, for I have perceived some of his languishing glances when he thought himself unobserved. It strongly occurs to me that they are of intelligence in the plan, and that Nettleby's diffidence of the success of the suit is assumed, to enhance his nephew's merit in being willing to engage in it."

A sudden flash of light seemed to burst on the mind of Rosina, and left her not a doubt that Mrs. Fitzosborne's sagacity had hit the right point. Her breast seemed relieved from a heavy weight of sorrow and anxiety, and, in the first emotion of her surprise, she was going to reveal to her friend all that had passed between Hume and herself, until the recollection of her promise restrained her, and she continued silent.

"If I find my conjectures to be just, (continued Mrs. Fitzosborne,) I shall be tempted to entertain the most sanguine expectations in respect to the event of the suit, as I am convinced nothing but the fairest prospect of success could induce Nettleby either to embark in it himself, or to entail it on his nephew. I am therefore determined to suffer your claim to lie dormant no longer. If I have wealth, to what more noble purpose can I consecrate it, than to that of establishing the just claims, and restoring the rights of an injured orphan, too long usurped by rapine and oppression? Notwithstanding the opposition which I know Mr. Fitzosborne will offer to this new proof of my blind infatuation, as I am certain he will term it, I have resolved to devote the sum of five thousand pounds to the prosecution of this business, and, whilst that money lasts, I am determined that it shall be carried on with spirit."

Rosina's heart was too full to permit her to express her feelings; she pressed the hands of her benefactress to her lips, and bathed them in the affecting tears of silent gratitude.

"Consider, Rosina, (resumed Mrs. Fitzosborne,) it is the rights of my son I support; for
I will

I will still flatter myself that your interests will one day be the same. But, Rosina, before we dismiss this subject, think not I ever meant to shackle the freedom of your affections with the fetters of obligation. I love you as my daughter, and wish on my son's account, no less than on my own, to make you such in reality; but, if your heart should form an attachment inconsistent with this view, let no false enthusiasm of gratitude and friendship influence you to restrain its emotions. You shall be absolutely mistress of your fate, and of your fortune. The man whom your heart approves, for I am convinced it will make a worthy election, shall be to me as a son; for such is my tenderness for my Rosina, that it diffuses itself over every thing that she loves."

"O my best friend! my dearest benefactress! (exclaimed Rosina,) in accents interrupted by sobs and tears,) you speak to me of freedom at the moment when you bind me by indissoluble obligations. But how fruitless are professions! My actions shall soon prove to you whether I deserve this generous tenderness."

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.THE NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

DUPLICITY DETECTED.

THE family had scarcely done dinner, and were yet at table, when a servant brought Mrs. Fitzosborne two letters from Dublin. One of them was directed in her son's hand: she hastily opened it.

"Congratulate me, (cried she, whilst her eyes sparkled with joy,) my son is at Florence, and will be with us in six weeks."

Fitzosborne's countenance changed at this intelligence. He cast a gloomy and suspicious glance at Rosina.

Mrs.

Mrs. Fitzosborne, after having read aloud to the company such passages of her son's letter as were calculated for public exhibition, recollected she had received a second.

"Rosina, (cried she, when she had read it,) my dear Rosina, fortune begins to smile on us. — See what we have here: the ticket in which we were partners is drawn a prize of three hundred pounds!"

The prospect of young Fitzosborne's immediate return had struck Rosina with a terror which had been considerably heightened by the ferocious glances of his father. Her thoughts, whilst Mrs. Fitzosborne read the letter, had been busily employed in meditating plans for her escape, but the want of money seemed to defeat them all. It was no wonder then, that, at such a moment, the gift of chance should assume the appearance of an interposition of Providence. All her difficulties seemed to vanish in a moment; her share of the prize, she imagined, would be amply sufficient to enable her to execute her project; but, suddenly recollecting that the scheme she planned was to separate her from her friend, she arose and left the room,

room, to conceal the tears which she could not restrain.

That very evening, having packed up some of the plainest of her cloaths, she delivered them to Auflin, who promised to get them carefully conveyed to town, and committed to the care of a friend, on whose integrity he could depend; and thus, by sending away small parcels at a time, she knew she could easily supply herself, without incurring any suspicion, with as much of her cloaths as might be necessary for her in the solitude to which she meant to retire.

The next morning Mr. Hume, who was impatient to hear from Rosina's lips the confirmation of the happiness which he imagined awaited him, appeared impatient for an opportunity of speaking to her in private; and, as she had no wish to decline giving him one, he soon found her alone, and earnestly entreated to know her decision, not in the least doubting that it would be favourable to his wishes.

"But first, Mr. Hume, (said Rosina,) permit me to ask you one question; have you never, (continued she, fixing her eyes earnestly on his,)
have

have you never heard of a law-suit that has long depended in my family?"

Hume was exceedingly embarrassed by this question. If he answered positively in the negative, he dreaded lest his uncle had dropped some hints which might prove the contrary of such an assertion. He replied with hesitation, that he had indeed heard some incoherent hints relative to such a matter; but that she could not suppose that the prospect of any very uncertain advantage of that nature could have influenced the addressess he had done himself the honour to make her.

"But (said Rosina) you and your uncle have conferred about this matter, and he did not disapprove your addressess."

Hume, now certain that his uncle had betrayed his secret, acknowledged that he did not; but at the same time positively disclaimed all interested views on his own part, and affected to speak very lightly of her right to a fortune so long the object of contention,—a right by this time, as he professed to believe, entangled in insurmountable difficulty.

"But,

"But, (said Rosina, determined to probe him still deeper,) before you heard of this disputed right, you never entertained one serious thought of me."

Hume, still more embarrassed and confounded, protested that, from the first hour he beheld her, he admired her most passionately. It was true, indeed, that his paternal fortune was very small,—and he hesitated in confusion.

"But an instant ago, Mr. Hume, (said Rosina,) you disclaimed all views of interest, and now you tacitly acknowledge them. Yesterday you expressed great apprehension of your uncle's opposition to your wishes, and to-day you confess he was acquainted with your addresses to me, and approved them. When the heart speaks its own simple language, contradictions of this nature can never occur. I am not so childishly romantic as to reject the suit of a lover, because his circumstances would not permit him, or that his inclinations might not lead him to marry me without a fortune; but sincerity has ever been the first of human virtues in my estimation, and I cannot consent to unite myself to a man, whose experienced duplicity would excite continual distrust; a man, who

who has artfully studied to deceive me by assuming the appearance of a generosity foreign to his heart. I was unbiassed by partiality for any other person, and, had I been treated with candour, an union might possibly have taken place between us; for, be assured, you will find it much easier to reach the heart of a woman, whose affection is worth wishing for, by a manly sincerity, than by disingenuous concealment and shallow artifice."

Rosina withdrew as she spoke, and the determined steadiness of her manner convinced Hume that it would be in vain to solicit a repeal of the sentence she had passed. He sought Mr. Fitzosborne, and, in a transport of rage and vexation, bitterly complained of the imprudent loquacity of his uncle, who, as he had every reason to believe, had betrayed their intelligence either to Mrs. Fitzosborne or Rosina, and by that means utterly frustrated their projected plan. Fitzosborne, at this information, was scarcely less irritated than Hume. He had indulged himself with the hope of getting Rosina married before the return of his son, and to find his views thus traversed by the folly of the person whose interest it was to promote them, extremely disconcerted and provoked him. Whilst both gentlemen were venting the
spleen

spleen of vexatious disappointment in execrations on the absurdity which had thus counteracted their schemes, Mr. Nettleby very calmly walked into the room, utterly unconscious of the storm that awaited him.

“ So, counsellor, (cried Fitzosborne,) you have made a fine piece of work of it here ! After having been at the trouble of carrying on our machinations for near a fortnight, just at the moment when we thought ourselves secure of success, to blow up our whole design in this manner !”

“ I do not know what the devil (cried Hume, in a rage) could have put it into your head to meddle in the affair at all ! A fine specimen you have given us of the wisdom and sagacity you keep such a noise about !”

“ As I am a living man, (cried Nettleby,) I know no more what you mean than a blackmoor ! For my part, I believe you are both gone out of your senses ; but is there any thing marvellous in that, in a country which is one universal Bedlam, and of which all the inhabitants are maniacs ?”

“ Not all, (said Fitzosborne sharply,) for there

are still ideots enough amongst us; and fools, they say, never go mad. What business had you, in the devil's name, to acquaint Mrs. Fitzosborne or Rosina, that Harry Hume courted the latter with your approbation, and on account of the property which he had reason to hope would devolve to her?"

"Bedlam, Bedlam! (exclaimed the old gentleman, drawing up his eye-brows, and shaking his head and both hands,) mad, mad as March hares!"

"Just at the moment (cried Hume) when I had wound her up to a proper pitch of gratitude for my disinterested attachment, and thought myself secure of carrying my point without the slightest opposition, to have her turn on me like a little tygres, reproach me with dissingenuousness and want of candour, and insult me with my uncle's consent and approbation!"

"Go on, gentlemen, (cried Nettleby,) pray go on!"

"I had the most particular reasons (said Fitzosborne,) for wishing this connexion to take place."

"Aye,

"Aye, now it is your turn," said Nettleby.

"And it is extremely severe that my plans should be thus rendered abortive," pursued Fitzosborne, "by the very person too whose interest, as well as duty, it was to uphold and promote them."

["It is indeed very severe," said Hume.

"And now, gentlemen, (said Nettleby,) if you will allow me leisure to put the question, how, in the name of wonder, have I disjointed and circumvented all these fine plots, plans, schemes, projects, and machinations of your's !"

"By revealing them to Mrs. Fitzosborne or Miss Mortimer," said Hume.

"And pray, who has informed your sagacious worships that I disclosed them to Mrs. Fitzosborne or Miss Mortimer? So far was I from dropping a hint of this nature, that, no later than yesterday, before dinner, on being very closely questioned by Mrs. Fitzosborne, in respect to my opinion of the law-suit, I professed myself quite dubious of the success of it, (Lord pardon me for the falsehood!)

and said that the best thing she could do for the girl would be to get her married to some young lawyer. I mentioned Harry Hume indeed, but said that he was such a damned conceited puppy, that I supposed he would think himself entitled to a finer girl and a better fortune, without taking the trouble of going to law for them."

"I am greatly indebted to you for your favourable representation of my character, (cried Hume.) It is no wonder the young lady should not be greatly enamoured of such a portrait."

"So, (said Fitzosborne,) here is the solution of our enigma! Give a woman the slightest item of a plot, and she traces it through all its mysteries, however intricate."

"She must be a devil, instead of a woman, (cried Nettleby,) who could trace you through your windings and intricacies! Your conversation is all mazes and labyrinths, enigmas and problems, riddles and rebuffs, to me; but I believe in my conscience you are both mad, and that settles the point at once. — Here, Robert, (ringing the bell until the servant appeared,) put my saddle on the dun mare, and get me my boots.

Some

Some epidemical insanity seems to prevail in this place, and I will get beyond the sphere of its influence as soon as I can. I shall be rejoiced to find myself once more amongst the habitations of tame animals, if such are to be found."

As Mr. Fitzosborne was too much displeased to offer any violent opposition to this measure, it was immediately executed, and the old gentleman departed in great ire.

CHAP. VIII.

THE NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

ROSINA's rejection of Mr. Hume produced, as she imagined it would, more fiery persecutions on the part of Fitzosborne than she had till then encountered. To his expostulations, remonstrances, and even threats, she mildly answered, as she had done before, that she had no intention of forfeiting her promise, so repeatedly given, and that he should very soon have reason to

ROSINA.

be satisfied. Thus, urged by every motive to hasten her departure, she determined not to defer it one unnecessary moment; and, as the bewildered mariner, shuddering at the horrors of the tempestuous ocean, darts forward the glance of keen anticipation towards some secure and tranquil haven, where he may rest from his labours and retrieve his peace, Rosina's wishes were ardently directed to that scene of humble serenity which fancy fondly pictured to her imagination; that solitary cottage whose quietness and silence might sooth her agitated spirits to repose, and the internal cheerfulness, inspired by the consciousness of rectitude, illuminate her lowly dwelling. But many difficulties still impeded the execution of her design: to effect it, it was necessary that she should contrive to get into her possession her share of the money arising from the prize; but, totally unversed in every species of artifice, she knew not on what pretence to express to her friend a wish for the possession of so much money, and dreaded, lest the confusion which must accompany the intimation of such a desire, should betray the motive it proceeded from.

Her mind remained for two days in this state of anxious uncertainty. Mr. Hume still continued

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at Belle-vue ; he was by this time so greatly captivated with Rosina, that he would have married her with less fortune than any other woman ; and he could not without extreme reluctance relinquish the prospect of an alliance which would at once have highly gratified the feelings of his heart, and opened the fairest prospect to his ambition. He determined to persevere, in spite of discouragement, and hoped, by assuming the love-lorn airs of a despairing shepherd, to interest Rosina's compassion, and bend her resolution to his wishes.

Mrs. Fitzosborne perceived Rosina's augmented melancholy with extreme disquietude ; and, imputing it entirely to the unkind and contemptuous treatment she received from Mr. Fitzosborne, she fancied that exercise and change of scene might contribute to dissipate her gloom. In this idea she proposed to her to make an excursion to town for a few days.

“ I do not think (continued she) that I am yet quite well enough to leave home, but you shall go to Lady Franklin, who has so often solicited your company, and, if you can find any amusement, I entreat you will not be in a hurry to return. As I must make some preparations for the return of

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my son, I have many commissions which I must employ you to execute. Do not let me forget to give you our ticket, that you may receive our money."

Rosina's heart palpitated at this proposal, which seemed to obviate all her difficulties ; but this first sense of satisfaction was instantly succeeded by a chilling horror, that seemed to creep through her veins at the idea of the separation that was so soon to take place. The plan, which, at a distance, had appeared easy to be executed, now, on its nearer approach, seemed to be attended with dangers unweighed, and difficulties unseen before. Her mind was naturally firm, but its fortitude had never been strengthened by exertion : its determinations seemed feeble, and its flights weak and wavering, like those of the young bird when first driven by maternal prescience from the parental nest. On recalling the insults she had received from Fitzosborne, her offended pride instigated her to immediate action. On recollecting the tenderness of her beloved benefactress, that pride was extinguished in the softness of affection,—an affection which no motive but her reiterated promises to Fitzosborne could have supplied her with resolution to combat even for an instant.

The

The twilight of the evening prevented Mrs. Fitzosborne from reading in Rosina's countenance these alternate sensations of her heart. "You shall go to-morrow," said she.

"Oh! not to-morrow!" said Rosina.

"Well, the day after; but why are you thus agitated? why do you tremble? Is there any thing dreadful in the idea of leaving me for a few days?"

"No, no, not for a few days; but I could wish never to leave you: however, I will go, I believe, but not to-morrow!"

"Well, when you please," said Mrs. Fitzosborne, surprised at her excessive emotion.

"The day after, then, (said Rosina,) let it be, if it must be."

"Indeed, my sweet Rosina, (said Mrs. Fitzosborne, fondly throwing her arms around her,) I fear you will defeat all my projects; and, should my Hector at his return find you thus pale, dejected, and weak spirited, I doubt he will accuse

me of having drawn a faithless and flattering portrait of you."

"O madam! (said Rosina,) why will you still persist in a project, of which Mr. Fitzosborne has so openly avowed his utter detestation? Do you not perceive that his aversion to me is implacable? Consent then; on my knees I would supplicate you to consent, that I may leave a house in which I can no longer continue consistently with propriety. Place me for a time beneath the protection of some of your friends. Lady Bell Beauchamp's benevolence, abstracted from her friendship for you, and the regard with which she has favoured myself, would induce her to afford me for an interval the protection of her roof."

"But for one reason (replied Mrs. Fitzosborne, after a pause) I might perhaps yield to your solicitations; but I have a motive which, for the present, prevents me from consigning you to the guardianship of Lady Bell: it may not, however, very long exist, and a few months hence, if your residence in this house shall still continue to be equally disagreeable, I will no longer oppose your removal from it."

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"Mean time, (said Rosina,) whilst that objection, of which I own I cannot penetrate the motive, continues to prevail, let me remove to some other place. Why may I not board for a few months in a private family? I care not how retired the situation. I entreat, I beseech you not to refuse me this request! You know not how much may depend on it."

"No, Rosina. Lady Bell is the only person to whose guardianship I could venture to entrust you for more than a few days; but, if, as I strongly suspect, Mr. Fitzosborne has treated you with indignity and insult, of which in tenderness to me you forbear to complain,—with indignity and insult which you neither can nor ought to endure, I repeat to you the proposal I made to you in his presence, that of quitting with you the house from which he drives you by ill treatment."

"Oh, no! never (said Rosina) shall it be said by others,—shall I undergo the mortification of repeating to myself that I have been the unhappy cause of the division of a family to which I have been so deeply indebted;—a family, in which my unprotected childhood found a sanctuary from

every inconvenience of indigence, and every danger of temptation."

"No, no, Rosina, (returned Mrs. Fitzosborne,) whatever future divisions may embroil this family, they can never with justice be attributed to you. Their cause is deep and radical, originating in the eternal opposition of irreconcilable sentiments, and of views perpetually at variance. We may, however, contrive to elude the censure of which you appear apprehensive. An excursion, for instance, to some watering place in England. My physician, I am certain, would approve such a measure, and, as the re-establishment of my health would naturally appear to demand it, it would offer no subject of investigation to idle curiosity. Suppose to Bristol."

"What! (said Rosina,) to prevent you from witnessing the arrival of your son, from whom you have so long been separated?—a son so tenderly the object of your affection!"

"Long and ardently as I have wished for his arrival, (returned Mrs. Fitzosborne,) I shall find no difficulty in making so trifling a sacrifice, when concerns more momentous are at stake."

"So

"So trifling a sacrifice!" repeated Rosina.

"Yes, as that of waiting to welcome his return to Ireland, when I know the warmest impulses of his heart will lead him to pursue our traces."

"But, if Hector Fitzosborne and I are to meet, (said Rosina,) and to become inmates of the same house, will not Mr. Fitzosborne's objections, which it is so fervently my wish to obviate, still continue to subsist in full force? Nay, would not such a measure exasperate him to still more implacable aversion?"

"Well, Rosina, and where can he throw the censure that will not recoil on himself? — on his own despotic pride and ungoverned ambition, which drive from beneath his roof the persons to whom it ought naturally to afford protection and comfort."

"But, madam, I have certainly no right to that protection, and from me alone he wishes to withhold it. Mr. Fitzosborne would not, I imagine, wish to see me totally deserted, totally abandoned to distress and poverty; but, if, from

motives which I have no right either to censure or repine at, he desires me to quit his house, where my presence might interfere with his designs, I have surely no title to murmur, and still less to disobey. Indeed, my own feelings strongly represent to me the impropriety of awaiting here the arrival of your son."

"Well, then, we will go to Bristol."

"What! to be followed thither by Hector?"

"Well, my love, and what then? (said Mrs. Fitzosborne, smiling;) I hope you will find him a very agreeable companion."

"I cannot, I must not encounter so dangerous a trial. O madam, would to heaven you could be persuaded to relinquish a project that makes me miserable! Has not Mr. Fitzosborne an equal right with yourself in the disposal of your son?—Why, then, should you wish him to receive into his family a person he dislikes and despises?"

"Rosina, (said Mrs. Fitzosborne, with more seriousness,) you mistake the point: neither Mr. Fitzosborne nor myself have any right to dispose of
the

the hand or of the heart of our son ; but a good parent will endeavour to influence those sentiments which he may have no authority to control. — Yet, Rosina, if Hector on his return should view you with indifference, be assured nothing is more remote from my intention than to allure him into an attachment which must excite his father's disapprobation, — at least, his temporary disapprobation ; for, if this fortune of your's should be recovered, and that we could contrive to get this little foolish Lady Flora out of the way, I should not wonder to see him as solicitous to promote this union, as he is at present earnest to discourage it. But, though her fortune, title, but above all, her long line of ancestry, render her at present a very formidable obstacle to my wishes, I fancy I shall not long have this inconvenience to lament. If I am not mistaken in her ladyship, she will soon spare her guardian the trouble of providing a suitable establishment for her."

"How?" said Rosina.

"So rich, so young, so silly, but above all, so vain, she can scarcely escape the snares which the subtlety of interested artifice will extend to entrap her ; for the mind, in which a passion for
gross

gross adulation is predominant, lies at the mercy of every invader, and, without judgment to discriminate between real attachment and pretended admiration, it requires not the spirit of divination to foretell that she will become the prey of some indigent adventurer, who, whilst he grasps with rapacity at her fortune, will find no difficulty in persuading her that her heart is the object of his pursuit."

"What a wretched destiny will then be her's ! (said Rosina.) Can the heart of a woman experience a severer disappointment than that of finding the bosom it loves, and relies on, destitute of every spark of affection and every principle of honour ?"

"I think it cannot, (returned Mrs. Fitzosborne ;) but to Lady Flora, who is in reality capable of loving nothing but herself, that disappointment will not be felt in half its bitterness. — But, however low she stands in my esteem, I would endeavour to rescue her from future distress, if the attempt were practicable ; but the incorrigible caprice of her temper counteracts every effort of benevolence, and it is impossible for truth or honour to acquire any ascendant over a mind that

that is only vulnerable to artifices to which they never can descend. Am I to blame, then, for wishing her to precipitate a step, which, sooner or later, I foresee she will take? and from desiring to derive advantage from an imprudence which I cannot prevent?"

"After all, (said Rosina,) what would it avail? Mr. Fitzosborne's aversion to me is fixed, his resolution is irrevocable. If your son once felt some partiality for me, it is most probably long since forgotten; why then should you wish to revive an attachment which would necessarily entangle him in distress and perplexity?"

"Because I wish to see him virtuous, and rewarded for his virtue; because I think the possession of my Rosina a prize worth some struggles against despotic authority. Honourable love is the most effectual antidote against vice, the most faithful guardian of virtue; it exalts the bosom it inhabits into a "paradise of sainted spirits," for every kind affection of the heart, and every noble faculty of the soul, derives lustre from its presence, and energy from its influence. Shall I then drive this angel from the bosom of my son, to make room for the admission of those demons, whose
dominion

dominion his father would establish, those unclean and unquiet spirits of avarice and ambition, which domineer over his own with a tyranny so unbounded ! You, my Rosina, were bequeathed to my protection by the friend most dear to me ; so sacred a devolution seemed alone sufficient to incite me to watch over your young heart, and form it to virtue ; but I had other considerations, which gave additional vigour to my exertions. — Whatever obligations you might owe to my tenderness, I flattered myself with a fond persuasion that you would one day repay it in affection to my son ; and now, when he is on the point of returning to claim the debt, will you ungratefully disavow it ?”

“ Never, never ! (said Rosina,) never can I, never will I ungratefully disavow the obligations I have no means of repaying !—but I cannot meet your son.”

“ Well, well, (replied Mrs. Fitzosborne, smiling,) we must leave him to plead his own cause. But, my dear Rosina, you consider Mr. Fitzosborne’s displeasure in a light too serious. I know his character : fondness for his son is his predominant principle, and it governs in his breast with

with a sway the more despotic, because it is not counteracted by any other affection. If we have fortitude for the conflict, his prejudices will at length yield to his paternal tenderness. — But I must leave you. I have promised the gentlemen a party at picquet. If Hector and you (continued she, rising as she spoke) should prefer each other when you meet, I shall not be easily persuaded to relinquish a scheme I have so long and so fondly cherished; if you should not, as may possibly be the case, there is an end at once of all our difficulties."

CHAP. IX.

THE NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

"AN end to our difficulties!" repeated Rosina, when she found herself alone. — "Gracious heaven! where are mine to end, when every hour increases and renders them more complicated

plicated? Can I then determine to go to disappoint the wishes, and wound by my flight the heart that so tenderly loves me,—that will deplore my absence with such fond regret, and tremble with such anxious solicitude for my safety! Yet to stay,—to incur the too-just reproaches to which my breach of promise to Mr. Fitzosborne will render me liable,—to subject myself to be treated with new scorn, with insufferable insult, and indignity not to be endured! Yes, the die is cast, no alternative remains! O too fervent, but mistaken friend! why, by suffering the generous ardour of your heart to triumph over the cooler dictates of your reason, why will you drive me to so dangerous an expedient!—Yet, to stay,—to meet Hector Fitzosborne, perhaps to become the object of his attachment,—perhaps to return it;—to lose, perhaps, in the softness of a weak partiality, this sense of offended virtue that glows at this instant in my bosom;—to become mean enough to wish for a connexion with the son of the man who hates me;—to learn the servility of stooping to conciliate the good opinion of him whom in my soul I despise;—no, never! I feel an utter repugnance to the idea of an alliance with the son of Fitzosborne, my bitterest enemy, my malevolent persecutor! Nay, will not that son,

son, at his return, be taught to consider me as a wretch who meanly endeavours to ensnare him by artful allurements? May he not learn to laugh at the fantastic plan formed in the fond imagination of his too partial mother, and join with his father in ridiculing and deriding the chimerical and presumptuous expectations of the orphan, supported through charity in his family?"

An agonizing pang darted through her bosom at the idea. The last argument was decisive: the pride of delicacy can overcome its softness, and the excess of sensibility animate to the exertion of fortitude.

"Yet still (said she, wiping off her tears as she hastily traversed the room,) yet still, forlorn, despised, orphan as I am, it is still in my power to manifest a spirit superior to my circumstances, and evidence by my flight my contempt of the views that are attributed to me. And wherefore should I hesitate? what have I to apprehend? In the peaceful solitude to which I shall retire, no opposition of interests will excite animosity, and the arrows of malevolence will disdain a mark so obscure."

Her

Her reflexions were interrupted by a summons to supper.

Mr. Hume looked very sorrowful during the repast. When the supper was removed, and the servants withdrawn, "I am told, Miss Mortimer, (said he, in a very plaintive tone,) that you are going to Dublin."

"I intend it, Sir," said Rosina.

"Miss Mortimer (said Mrs. Fitzosborne) is so good as to undertake to execute some commissions for me, as I am not yet well enough to leave home. It is time to begin to think of making some preparations for the return of my son."

"And Miss Mortimer (said Fitzosborne, with an air of sarcastic chagrin) will also have preparations to make on her own account against this important event."

"Possibly she may, (said Mrs. Fitzosborne.) I intend to celebrate it with two or three balls, and shall hope, Mr. Hume, for the pleasure of your company."

"And

“And so (said Fitzosborne, with an air of still greater ill humour) there is a large importation of frippery to be made in honour of Hector’s expected arrival; but, however such paltry female arts may entrap the hearts of some silly coxcombs, his is greatly superior to them, and the nets that are spread to ensnare his admiration will only excite his contempt.”

This observation, too pointed to escape unfelt, suffused Rosina’s cheeks with a blush of indignation.

“I have often (continued Fitzosborne) pitied, whilst I despised the infatuation of a silly girl, when I have seen her spreading her gaudy plumes, and fluttering, like a butterfly, unconscious of danger which every one could perceive, around the flame that was destined to consume her honour. Our ears are assailed on all sides with loud exclamations and female clamours, raised against perfidious, inconstant, and perjured lovers; but what right have the sex to complain of attacks which were first invited, and afterwards encouraged by their own coquetry? A man may have a sense of honour sufficiently prevalent, but honour can neither metamorphose her votary into an absolute
6 marble

marble statue, nor oblige him to unite himself for life to a woman whose conduct has taught him to despise her."

Mrs. Fitzosborne immediately perceived that this harangue had not been delivered without some particular aim; but, as Rosina had never informed her of the insulting conversations he had before addrest to her, she was at some loss to developé its meaning.

"Your reflexions (said she coldly) may perhaps have some justice, but I think them rather foreign to the subject of Hector's return."

"I, madam, (said he, sternly,) am of a contrary opinion; and if you had a true value for the person in whose advantage and honour you pretend to be most deeply interested, you would consider them as points of no little moment, and endeavour, by a prudential regard for the safety of that person, to prevent those evil consequences which you may bitterly lament when it is too late to redress them."

"Gracious heaven! (said Mrs. Fitzosborne, thrown off her guard by her astonishment,) how am

am I to interpret these doubtful and mean insinuations !”

“ Perhaps (said he, with a malignant sneer) Miss Mortimer may supply you with lights to assist you in the developement.”

“ Miss Mortimer (returned she) can supply me with no lights but those of simple ingenuousness and native understanding, — lights wholly inadequate to the task of clearing the dark windings of unmerited malice and unprovoked revenge. Come, Rosina, (continued she, rising and taking her trembling hand, whilst Hume looked aghast at the scene,) come, my Rosina, and fear nothing. Malice and calumny may shoot their fiery bolts, but they will play, like harmless lightnings, round the breast that is armed with the intrepid fortitude of conscious honour !”

She supported Rosina's tottering steps towards the door.

“ Since you have got on your stilts, (said Mr. Fitzosborne, with another of his sarcastic sneers,) I am heartily glad to see you stalking away on
VOL. II. F them.

them. Come, Harry Hume, fill your glass; what are you dreaming of?"

"My stilts (said Mrs. Fitzosborne, instantly adopting his style, and changing her countenance to an air, and her voice to a tone of ironical archness,) my stilts may perhaps be shortly converted into seven-league boots, and bear me, with my amiable charge, to some region far remote from the empire of the domineering spirit, who finds a cruel pleasure in torturing the innocent, and would bind the freedom of the will in the shackles of despotism."

She withdrew with Rosina, as she uttered this threat, which, however enigmatical it might have sounded to Hume, was perfectly understood by Fitzosborne.

"And shall we not go, then, my beloved Rosina? (said Mrs. Fitzosborne, as soon as they were alone;) shall we not together leave the mansion of the tyrant who insults us both?"

Rosina, who, in the foregoing injurious insinuations thrown out by Fitzosborne, had remarked not the angry flash of sudden resentment, nor

unpremeditated ebullition of more confirmed ill-humour, but the keen and cool malevolence of predetermined insult, no longer doubted that it was his intention to drive her from his family by treating her, even before company, with an indignity to which she knew she could not with decency submit, and now first began to hesitate in her resolution.

“Why should I persist in declining the proposed measure of my generous friend? (said she to herself;) a measure which will contribute no less to her happiness than to my own; for will it not be happiness to escape from beneath the roof of such a monster, and will it not be justice to punish his brutality by a flight to which he is so strongly averse?—But does punishment belong to me? or can his vices extenuate my faults? Because he is brutal and malicious, shall I be selfish and inequitable? My repeated promise, too, that he should have reason to be satisfied with my conduct;—fine satisfaction, to deprive him of a wife,—perhaps to make him appear detestable in the eyes of the son he adores! Will not that soon too fulfil the predictions of his father, and abhor the unhappy cause of the disunion of his family?”

“Well, Rosina, (said Mrs. Fitzosborne, who had remarked in her countenance the varying emotions of her mind,) on what have you determined?”

“To do what is right, (replied Rosina, if I can find what that is; but I feel, that, to suffer you to be led so far astray, by your partiality, as to desert your house before the return of your son, would be the very reverse of what is right. He, at least, deserves to be consulted and confided in.”

“Oh! (said Mrs. Fitzosborne, embracing Rosina,) how clear are the perceptions of the unperverted and ingenuous mind! how much superior to that casuistry which is so often dazzled and bewildered with the multiplicity of its own lights! You are right, very right, my sweet Rosina; and, whilst you pursue the dictates of that pure and upright heart of yours, I am persuaded you can never be otherwise.”

“Heaven grant it!” said Rosina with fervor, wiping away a tear.

CHAP. XXX.

THE NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

THE threat which Mrs. Fitzosborne had uttered as she and Rosina quitted the supper-room, lost not its effect on her tender help-mate, to whose plans it must deal a most fatal blow, should it ever be carried into execution. Hector Fitzosborne, it is true, had always respected his commands, and treated his admonitions with filial observance; but he could not avoid perceiving, with all the uneasy vexation of jealousy, the strong, though gentle thralldom in which he was held by the softer virtues of his mother. Duty and reason bent his inclinations to the will, and taught his heart to acknowledge the rights of a father; but her's was the resistless empire of tenderness; and the homage he paid her was voluntary and implicit. Well assured, that, to whatever retreat she should retire, her son would pursue her footsteps;

and, fully sensible of the ascendant Rosina's charms might acquire over a breast which had experienced their power, even whilst they were yet in their infancy, he saw his malevolence had betrayed him into an error, and he determined to submit to concession and entreaty, disagreeable as such a medium appeared, rather than suffer the departure of Mrs. Fitzosborne with Rosina. For he still hoped to find an opportunity of entangling the object of his hatred in some snare, or aspersing her with some odium which might degrade her in the eyes of his son, and prevent his pride, at least, from yielding to the influence of the ascendant which her virtues, her talents, and her loveliness, so eminently qualified her to obtain over his heart.

As Mr. Hume was considered as deeply concerned in the success of his stratagems, Mr. Fitzosborne determined to place a partial confidence in him, thinking it not improbable, that, as that young gentleman's interests were deeply interwoven with his own, his agency might in future be of singular advantage to him. He therefore informed him of his true reason for so warmly endeavouring to promote his connexion with Rosina, of the recovery of whose fortune he still professed to entertain not any doubt; and alledged, as the
motive

motive of his opposition to her union with his son, a sacred promise which he had given to the Earl of ———, Lady Flora's father, to effect an alliance between the young lady and Hector Fitzosborne.

Though Mr. Hume did not give implicit credit to this account, he at least affected to do so. It appeared to him highly improbable, that such a promise should be exacted from Fitzosborne by a person of the Earl's rank, consequence, and fortune; though exceedingly natural, that the plan of such an alliance should be formed in the mind of the former, whom he knew to be vain, interested, and ambitious. At all events, new sources of hope were opened to his mind: young Fitzosborne's union with Lady Flora would remove, he imagined, every obstacle to his own with Rosina; and, judging of the sentiments of that young man from his own, it seemed unnatural and improbable, that he should reject an alliance so splendid, and so strongly recommended by the wishes and authority of his father; and prefer the orphan and portionless Rosina to the highly-born and richly-endowed Lady Flora. Having now, as he imagined, discovered the cause of Rosina's coldness, he was less mortified by it than when he

thought it had proceeded from utter insensibility to his merit. Though she had assured him she was unbiassed by partiality, she had never informed him she was uninfluenced by ambition. He therefore determined to persevere in his suit, nothing doubting, that when disappointed in her views in respect to young Fitzosborne, she would be easily persuaded to listen to his proposals: and thinking it politic, in the meantime, to endeavour to establish, by the constancy of his attachment, some degree of interest in her favour.

The mind of Rosina, now stedfastly determined on the execution of her plan, became less distracted and fluctuating: she got some repose, and arose early next morning rather more composed. She knew she had much to do, and much to think of; and to assist her memory, wrote particular memorandums of every thing which it might be necessary to take with her, as well as of all that it would be requisite to purchase on her arrival in Dublin.

One idea now occurred to Rosina, which occasioned her infinite distress and anxiety: this was the difficulty of fixing a correspondence with some person from whom she might, from time to time,
receive

receive intelligence respecting the family of the Fitzosbornes. To be obliged to quit that family, to wander alone into a comfortless and solitary exile, was a sufficient trial to her fortitude; but to bear into that exile the corroding weight of anxious uncertainty, the restless solicitude of unsatisfied curiosity, the painful and melancholy apprehensions which the sensibility of extreme affection, is no less ingenious to inspire than susceptible to feel! To such a torment Rosina could not determine to doom herself: and it appeared inevitable, that she must either find a confidante for her plan, or resolve to renounce it.

But where find this confidante? Amongst her young companions there were many whose attachment she could rely on, though not one on whose discretion she could depend. Of these companions Miss Cleora Marsdon was the most favourite and intimate. Her gaiety, good humour, and long-experienced affection for Rosina, had rendered her very dear to her; and she was sometimes almost inclined to blame herself for distrusting her discretion. She could not recollect that she had ever, in any instance, betrayed her confidence; but neither could she remember that she had ever reposed any in her. The candid
F 5 openness

openness of her own nature, averse to dissimulation, and despising unnecessary concealment, had hitherto put the retention of her friends to very little trial. Instead of wrapping up trifles in the veil of affected mystery, like many other young ladies of her age, so ingenious in the coinage of secrets, and so consequential in confiding them. It was Rosina's pride and pleasure to do nothing which required disguise, to "know no thought but what the world might hear."

Still, however, the volatile loquacity of her young friend inspired her with apprehension: she felt no fear that she would designedly betray her confidence; but she dreaded, lest her giddy inadvertency might discover her secret, even at the moment when she was most solicitous to conceal it.

In this dilemma she determined to have recourse to Austin, through the channel of whose connections she flattered herself it might be possible to receive that intelligence which she was afraid to require from her friend Miss Marston.

The family was not yet risen. She went into the garden, and held a long consultation with
Austin,

Austin, to whom she now imparted her scheme more explicitly than she had hitherto done; and the good man, whose respect for her even surpassed his affection, whatever surprise a determination so unaccountable occasioned him, acquiesced in her measures without enquiry or remonstrance.

C H A P. XI.

THE NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

ROSINA then enquired of Austin, whether he had any friend on whose fidelity and discretion he could so far rely, as to venture to write to him at intervals, for information relative to the state of Mr. Fitzosborne's family.

“Aye, and that I have, (replied Austin with an air of triumph;) there's my old friend and crony, Master Solomon Stringer, the parish-clerk;
F 6 he's

he's the very man for our money among ten thousand; for if you tell him a secret, I defy the old boy himself, as cunning as he is, to squeeze it out of him. And that was the reason that made me give your trunks and things into his care, because he has a sister in Dublin, a very genteel kind of body, that keeps a huckster's shop on Pimlico: and so, you see, the things can lay very snug and safe at her house, until I goes myself and fetches them away."

Though Rosina was no stranger to the person of Master Solomon Stringer, and had often at church been edified by his devout and sanctified demeanour, yet she could not without infinite repugnance consent to his being made acquainted with the secret of her retreat.

"Indeed; Austin, (said she,) I am afraid to depend on him. These people are in general so talkative, and so fond of telling news ——."

"Why, to be sure, that's true for you, Miss, if you talk of these Irish folk, that are ten times sonder of meddling and making with any other body's business than their own; and why, that's the very thing that makes it go on so badly: for
you

you know, if a working man, instead of sticking close to his labour, for the maintenance of his family, takes it in his head to turn out an idle gentleman, and goes loitering about from ale-house to ale-house, spending the little pence that ought to support his family, a-hearing of news, and a-telling of it, laughing and singing, and diverting themselves, as if they were sent into the world for nothing but to carouse and make merry in it! And what's to become of the poor family at home all this time? The time for miracles is past; and it won't rain beans and bacon down the chimney. The children go flying away in rags; and the poor woman is forced to take a sup to comfort herself. And why, who can blame her? It is hard to say what a body may be driven to by bad usage: for it is ten to one, when my gentleman marches home at night, after his fine tantrums, that he flogs her and her children, because he finds them with empty bellies. Wherefore, I never will trust nothing to none of these Irish people while I live: not but they can be civil and agreeable enough in their own way; but I make it a maxim never to trust my secret with a man that cannot keep his own."

Rosina

Rosina interrupted Austlin, to enquire what countryman Mr. Solomon Stringer was.

He is an Englishman, like ourselves,) replied Austlin,) or else I wouldn't have nothing to do with him. But, as to keeping of a secret, as I was a-saying, the devil himself (saving your presence) couldn't worm one out of him: for I can be upon my oath, that, though I have kept his company fifteen years come lady-day, in March, I never heard him say three words in a breath, except in raising the psalms, or making the responses at church, or the like. He tell news! Ah, my dear Miss, he's quite and clean of another *careckter*. If he had the finest of stories in his head, there it might lie for his tongue: it would never be at the trouble of sending them abroad to take the air. In truth, he might almost as well be without one, if it was not in regard to raising the psalms, as I was a-saying.

“ But, Austlin, (said Rosina,) if he answers your description, he will probably be as much averse to writing as to speaking; and then we shall be likely to derive but little satisfaction from his correspondence.”

“ Oh,

“ Oh, no, (said Austin,) as to the matter of writing, it's quite another guess thing, for he's the best scribe in the county; and I make no question, but he could write you as good a sermon as the vicar himself: and, moreover, he can make such fine verses, that you would swear all the time that he was reading them out of his psalm-book. But as to the boxes and trunks I gave him to send to town to his sister, he knows no more what's in them than the man of the moon, but thinks as they all belong to myself; so, you know, if he hears ever so much of your being gone away, it will never come into his head to put things together, so as to make it out that we are gone away together. But I promised to give him a few cabbage plants, to set in a little bit of a garden he has in one corner of the church-yard: so he's to come to me at seven o'clock this evening; and if you will but just take the trouble to step down towards the big arbutus-tree in the shrubbery, why then you may judge for yourself, and see what manner of man he is.

Rosina promised to be punctual to the assignation. It was afterwards agreed, that Austin should obtain Mrs. Fitzosborne's permission to go to town

town early on the morrow morning, under pretence of having business of his own to transact.

“ And for matter of that, (said Austin,) why if it should be a thing that they are not willing to let me go, I can only give them leg. bail, and that’s all there’s for it. I don’t owe nothing to nobody. I am not bound by no indentures; and a servant is his own man, as well as his master.”

“ Very true, Austin, (said Rosina;) but Mrs. Fitzosborne’s indulgent kindness leaves you no room to doubt of her permission.”

“ O, (said Austin,) I only said *that*, set in case of a refusal, and not that I meant any disparagement. Mrs. Fitzosborne is a good lady, and a kind one, as ever broke bread, that I must say for her: yet, for all that, it would be a strange thing if I could bring her upon a par with you! I that ate of your noble father’s bread and drank of his drink, and nursed you on my knees, and dandled you in my arms a thousand and a thousand times, before ever I set eyes on her, or any of her kiff or kin —.”

Rosina

Rosina interrupted him with some other directions, and they separated. As she turned towards the house, she saw Mr. Hume at no great distance in the garden, and perceived that he had observed her in conference with Austin. However, as it was impossible that he could have overheard any part of their conversation, his having observed it gave her no uneasiness. He stopped in her way, and seemed desirous of speaking to her; but she crossed into another walk, purposely to avoid him, and reached the house before him.

C H A P. XIII.

THE NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

AT breakfast, Mr. Fitzosborne, who thought he had gone too far the preceding evening, treated Rosina with unusual complaisance, for which she felt inclined to dislike and despise him still more; as, fully sensible of the malevolence that rankled in his heart, she considered this inconsistency

consistency of conduct as a new proof of hypocrisy. Mrs. Fitzosborne, who imputed the deep dejection which still hung on her spirits, partly to resentment, and partly to vexation, at the treatment she had received from Mr. Fitzosborne, was impatient for her departure; and when breakfast was over, reminded her that it was time to pack up, and prepare for her little journey.

Whilst Rosina was employed in these necessary arrangements, her mind was busily occupied by the affair of the confidence; and she found no little difficulty in deciding between the pretensions of her friend, Miss Cleora Marsdon, and those of Mr. Solomon Stringer, the clerk of the parish. Inclination leaned to the side of the former; whilst prudence seemed inclined to determine in favour of the latter. The debate might have continued much longer, had it not been interrupted by her maid, who, happening to look out at one of the windows, exclaimed, "O dear! I protest, ma'am, as sure as you live, here's Miss Marsdon coming galloping across the lawn."

"Miss Marsdon! (said Rosina;) I imagined the family were all in Dublin, and expected to have

have met them there. Run down; and as soon as she alights, conduct her to me."

This opportune arrival, which Rosina was almost inclined to ascribe to the interference of her guardian sylph, instantly put an end to her debates and hesitation. The cold suggestions of prudence were over-ruled by the warmth of her affection; and she resolved to rely on the secrecy of her friend with the most implicit confidence.

Miss Marsdon entered the room with an air of agitation and eagerness.

"My dear Cleora, (said Rosina, embracing her affectionately,) this happiness was unexpected. I imagined you were still in Dublin."

"So we should have been, (returned Miss Marsdon,) but for a most extraordinary event. You cannot conceive how greatly I am rejoiced at having found you alone; I have so much to tell you, and I have but two minutes to stay. You don't look well yourself, my dear Rosina; you are packing up, I see. Where are you going? (Then, without waiting for Rosina's answer,) I have a secret to tell you, my dear friend, which I would
not

not venture to confide to any creature under heaven but yourself: and perhaps, when you have heard it, you will think I should have done better in confining it entirely to my own bosom. But there is such a heartfelt satisfaction in reposing one's vexations in the breast of a faithful friend! and, tormented and distressed as I have been, it is the least consolation I can allow myself. Besides, I can depend so implicitly on your secrecy —."

"Do not depend too implicitly on the secrecy of any one, my dear Cleora, (said Rosina.) If the secret is your own, and that you are desirous to confide it to me, I will most willingly receive it. If it is not, you have no right to repeat it to any one."

"Why, to be sure, I cannot say it is altogether my own; and perhaps it might be more proper to say nothing about the matter. However, now that I have excited your curiosity, it would look like ill-nature, not to gratify it."

"Not in the least, (replied Rosina;) now that you tell me it does not concern yourself, I have really no inclination to hear it: but if I had even the strongest, I should esteem the gratification of
my

my curiosity dearly purchased at the expence of your prudence."

"Nay, (said Miss Marsdon, with an air half piqued,) I would not force my confidence on any one. But I know, that with you a secret would be quite as safe as with myself; and that, if once I had exacted a solemn promise from you, you would sooner die than betray me."

"My dear Cleora, (said Rosina,) if you will take my advice, you will never place a confidence in any one whom you think it necessary to bind by solemn promises. The consciousness of a trust, implicitly reposed, is, to an honourable mind, the most sacred obligation. But we will speak of other matters. How is your sister Charlotte? Is she to be married very soon?"

"Why, that's the very thing I wanted to tell you about! And since I have come out this morning on purpose to disburthen my mind, and that I am very sure (although your discretion and politeness render you averse to asking questions) you must be excessively curious to hear the secret I have to confide to you, to shew you how implicitly

plicitly I can rely on your honour, I will tell you every thing without any promise at all."

Rosina, apprehensive perhaps, that if she obstinately persisted in declining this confidence, her poor friend, in her ride homewards, might be necessitated, by the burthensome weight of her secret, to dismount from her palfry, and whisper it, like the wife of Midas, to the first tuft of murmuring rushes she might happen to meet in her way,—seated herself on a sofa, and quietly disposed herself to listen to the intelligence her friend was so eager to impart; little as she was at that period inclined to interest her attention in subjects foreign to her own feelings.

"It is a strange story, indeed, (said Miss Marsdon,) and I scarcely know where to begin it. I must confess; poor Charlotte has acted a most inconsiderate part, to say the best of it; and to any other than you, I never could bring myself to expose the folly and weakness of a sister I love so tenderly."

"Now, my dear Cleora, (said Rosina,) would you have me take this declaration for a compliment? If I had a sister or friend, whose conduct
I thought

I thought blameable, the persons I esteem the most are those from whose knowledge I should most sedulously conceal her faults."

"But what matter, (returned Miss Marsdon,) whether you know her faults or not, when I am convinced you will never speak of what I am going to tell you to mortal breathing."

"Well," said Rosina, smiling.

"Well, you may remember, I told you long ago of Charlotte's flirtations with a young officer, Captain Mowbrey, and how his regiment was ordered to Scotland; and that, though they corresponded for a time, some how or other it was discontinued, and every one thought there was an end of it. Well, about nine or ten months afterwards, in figured Sir John Hunter with his proposals. You have seen Sir John at our house; and you know, after having been attached to such a pretty fellow as Mowbrey, it was a shocking hardship to be obliged to listen to the addresses of such a hideous old fright as Sir John, with his great round paunch, and goggle eyes, and crimson nose! He absolutely looks like a bug-bear, that was dressed up to frighten children. His face is
a thou-

a thousand times more like some odious, frightful vizard than any natural physiognomy: and I'll be sworn, if he was my husband, and that I had the least influence over him, I would persuade him to wear a mask at all times, for I positively don't think I ever could bring myself to endure the sight of that flaming countenance of his! It puts one in mind of Medusa and Megæra, and all the devils and furies. It is absolutely terrific! Well, you know it was no great wonder that poor Charlotte, after having been accustomed to contemplate the pretty little smooth smock-face of her little man of war, should not on a sudden become greatly enamoured of the splendors of this blazing star. Poor soul! she used to cry sadly, and bewail her disastrous passion at a great rate; and declared that Sir John was a detestable monster, and that she would sooner die a thousand deaths, than marry any such old fright. However, papa and mamma sometimes scolded and sometimes coaxed her; and brother George put the finishing stroke, by most solemnly swearing, that he would cut poor Mowbrey's throat, if ever she entertained a single idea of him. You may easily conjecture poor Charlotte's affliction and horror. I really have not a knack at the pathetic; it is not at all my fort; but if the story was well told, it would absolutely

absolutely make you cry your eyes out. Well, you may recollect, that sometime afterwards they contrived to get us all to Hunter-Hall, Sir John's principal country seat; and to acknowledge the truth, I believe the magnificence of the buildings, the richness of the furniture, the great number of servants, and the elegance of the equipages, began to soften Charlotte in the Baronet's favour, and to reconcile her to her duty, as she expressed it; though, for my part, I don't think any duty could oblige a girl to vow love and obedience to an horrible being that she must hate and detest. He always brought to my mind the story of Doctor Faustus and his fine castle in the wood; and I used to feel myself half inclined to go peeping about through the key-holes, in the expectation of discovering some clotted blood and murdered bodies: for you know Sir John has exceedingly the air of an old spiteful necromancer, with that fiery face of his. However, after this visit, every thing went on swimmingly: Charlotte's reluctance seemed to be at an end. You know it is not six weeks ago since we went to town to buy clothes, get settlements drawn, and so forth. Poor Charlotte seemed delighted with all the finery she was getting; though I often wondered, when I thought of the price she was to pay for it: but, happiness

the way we chuse it! Well, affairs went on as smoothly as possible, until one unfortunate Sunday evening that we went to the promenade; and who should we meet there but Mowbrey! I really thought poor Charlotte would have fainted; for he haunted us about like a discontented ghost. She complained of illness, and we got her home as soon as we could.

“ I protest, from that hour, I had not the least suspicion or idea of any correspondence between her and Mowbrey; so you may judge how I was petrified the other day, when papa came into the room to mamma and me, (we were dressing for a ball, which made it still more provoking,) with an open letter in his hand, in the most violent rage you ever saw, for he had just intercepted this letter (which laid open the whole transaction) by the strangest accident you can imagine. But I am in such a hurry, I have not time to tell you half the circumstances; for the good folks at home don't know where I am, and only think I am come out to take a little ride; for if they knew of my coming here, they might be apt to guess my business, and that would be high-treason, they are all so wonderfully discreet and secret. So, my dear, taking it into his wife head that I must necessarily be Charlotte's

con-

confidante, he flew at me like a turkey-cock, and scolded so, and it was with all the difficulty in the world I could persuade him that I knew nothing of the matter. My mother's rage at the discovery was even greater than my father's; but as to my brother George, he was absolutely like one frantic. He flew about the house like a wild cat, and overturned, in his fury, a fine Indian jar and two beakers. You never saw such confusion: mamma scolding and picking up her broken china, to try if they could be stuck together again; and George stamping, and foaming, and swearing at poor Charlotte. I could have laughed heartily, only I was afraid he would have beaten her, it was so droll. To tell the truth, I was not a-bit sorry the jars and beakers went to pot; for you know fine china is mamma's ruling passion, and our house is so stuffed up with them, that it is quite a bore, it is just like an India warehouse; and we are scarcely suffered to stir, for fear of breaking them.

“ Blood and fury, Madam! (cried George, planting himself opposite to poor Charlotte, his three-cornered hat stuck on the back of his head, his eyes starting out of their sockets with rage, his face as red as his regimental coat, and his arms

a-kimbo.) Blood and fury, Madam, what is it you mean by this behaviour! thus scandalously to forfeit your honour to Sir John, and bring an indelible disgrace on your family?"

"It would provoke a faint! (cried mamma.) My beautiful beakers, that I was at the pains of carrying from on shipboard under my own petticoats; to see them smashed in pieces so unmercifully!"

"So shamefully to jilt a person of Sir John's consequence and fortune, (said George,) and upon the account of a little, mean, shabby, sneaking, ——."

"To see such destruction, (cried mamma,) would never have vexed me, if it could have answered any one good purpose in the world; but to see the finest jar I ever had in my life ——."

"Damn the jar, Madam! (exclaimed George, turning fiercely towards her.) Is this a time to keep whining over your broken crockery, when the honour of your family is going to hell!"

"At

“ At least, (said mamma,) there’s no hurt in striving to save something out of the fire. When the jar is stuck together, it may serve for ornament almost as well as ever.”

“ To the devil with the jar, (said George, spurning with his foot the remaining fragments of the china, with a violence that sent them flying in small pieces to every corner of the room,) to the devil with the jar! Fitter, much fitter for you it would be to contrive some expedient to patch and plaster up your daughter’s cracked reputation, than to waste your time and thoughts on this ridiculous trumpery. To think of preferring a wretch without a shilling in his pocket, to a man of Sir John’s noble property! Here, get my sword and pistols! I’ll go this instant to the beggarly scoundrel, and squeeze his little, pitiful, paltry, insignificant soul out of his body!”

“ Now, my dear, as I don’t suspect that George, with all his vapouring airs, has a jot more courage than his neighbours, I could have laughed heartily at the scene, only that poor Charlotte, who was terrified to death, for fear her little lover should be put to the sword by this blustering Drawcansir, began to faint; and to prevent bloodshed and

G 3

murder,

murder, was obliged to beg pardon, and promise to marry Sir John: and so the affair was hushed up, and matters are *en train* once more. I could have forgiven her every thing but her double-dealing: but the little gipsy never was half so civil to Sir John as after she had determined to elope with Mowbrey. However, the good man is not to know a title of the matter; and he is such an insensible block, that I doubt whether he would like her much the worse if he did: for, though he has so much the air of a wizard, I promise you he is no conjurer. So now what do you think of this fine affair?"

"I think, Cleora, that the less it is spoken of, the more it will be for your sister's credit."

"Aye, my dear, that's the very thing I say; and for that reason, I determined never to mention it to mortal breathing, except yourself. Now, who could have suspected Charlotte of such a prank! She that looks so sanctified and demure. If she had been a giddy madcap, like you or me, she would have been infinitely more excusable. But I protest I think your prim pieces of still life are always more deep and designing than we volatile, thoughtless girls. But, as Charlotte was
older

older than we, she ought to have behaved properly, were it only to set us a pattern."

"If not a pattern, (said Rosina,) I hope, at least, her conduct will be a warning to us."

"I know it shall to me, (said Miss Marston;) and if any old Grecian or Trojan shall take it into his doating noddle to pay his odious, abominable addresses to me, I'll see him hanged, before all the fathers and mothers, and hectoring, ranting, brothers in Ireland, shall prevail on me to give him the least encouragement."

"I think you are perfectly in the right," said Rosina.

"But a-propos to old Trojans, my dear Rosina; I am positively informed, that, that oddest of all odd fishes, old Counsellor Nettleby, has been paying his devoirs to you."

"It is very true, indeed," said Rosina.

"Lord, my dear, I wonder you did not die with laughing! But I never saw you look so ill in your life! I hope there has been no persecution

cution on the old monster's account? Surely, Mrs. Fitzosborne could not think of sacrificing you to such a ridiculous antiquated being! with his old darned woollen stockings, rusty black coat, and brown wig. He's the very picture of some old pawn-broker, that had just crept down out of his garret, to lend money on pledges. He's even worse than Sir John, with his furious red nose. Now, in the name of wonder, what business could he have with such a wife as you?"

"O, a great deal, (said Rosina.) I was to keep his keys, and watch his servants, and mend his shirts and stockings, I suppose."

"O, abominable! Was it possible, that the old barbarian could conceive such brutal ideas! It puts one in mind of the beautiful Cunnegond washing dishes on the banks of the Propontes! But, adieu, my love, (rising and looking at her watch;) I have already outstaid my time, and I have still ten thousand things to tell you, and questions to ask you. Mais adieu, je vous laisse."

Rosina followed her to the door; and, tenderly pressing her hand, would have bid her farewell, but, affected at the idea of the interval that might probably

probably separate them, she felt her heart too much oppressed, to trust to her voice. She turned into her chamber in silent anguish; whilst the volatile and thoughtless Cleora flew down stairs, humming a tune.

Indiscreet communication, instead of inviting to reciprocation, precludes it. Rosina recollected old Austin's precept, and felt that it would be weak indeed to entrust her secret with a person so inadequate to the task of keeping her own. Thus, though her affection for the young lady led her to regret the conviction, she felt, that a person who could not debar herself the satisfaction of divulging and exposing the misconduct of a favourite sister, would be but a weak and faithless guardian to a secret, which a curiosity, arising from motives the most serious and interesting, would set every engine at work to develope: and to the attacks of which Miss Marsdon might be peculiarly liable; as, from her intimate connexion with Rosina, she would naturally be suspected of sharing her confidence.

Influenced by these considerations, she had suffered her young friend, whom she really loved, to depart, without dropping the most remote hint of

her intention, which she was now decided to confide to the habitual taciturnity of Master Solomon, the parish-clerk, rather than entrust to the unbounded loquacity of Miss Cleora Marsdon.

For the remainder of the day, the hurry of her various occupations blunted the keenness of those painful and melancholy reflections which still, however, hung heavily oppressive at her heart, and sent the sudden tears to her eyes.

C H A P. XII.

THE NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

So stiff, so mute, some statue, you would swear,
Stept from its pedestal, to take the air.

IN the evening, as Rosina stood at one of the parlour windows, and Mr. Hume, who still appeared solicitous to procure an opportunity of speaking to her, watched her motions at another, old

old Austin passed under the windows, and, looking up, cried hem ! with an air of intelligence which instantly reminded Rosina of her assignation. She stole out, unobserved, as she fancied, by any one ; and taking a little round, directed her steps towards the shrubbery, where she had appointed to meet Austin and his friend Master Solomon.

Mr. Hume was too acute and too strongly interested to suffer these manœuvres to pass unnoticed. He had from the first suspected some private intelligence between Rosina and Austin, though totally at a loss to conceive the nature of it. Austin's significant *hem*, as he passed under the window, had not been lost on him ; and Rosina's consequent excursion confirmed him in the persuasion, that they were carrying on some secret operations, though of what nature, now that he supposed Rosina's views to be directed to an union with young Fitzosborne, he could not possibly conjecture. Instigated by a strong desire to unravel these mysterious appearances, and not overburthened with that nice and scrupulous perception of honour to which some minds can sacrifice, without effort, every suggestion of unfair curiosity, he fancied he should incur no high degree of censure, though, in pursuance of an end

G 6

which

which in the main was equitable; he should deviate occasionally into paths a little bye and crooked. Consistently with these ideas, he determined to follow and watch Rosina; and observing that she took a path that led to the shrubbery, by a shorter way he reached it before her; and when he discovered through the trees Austin and another man standing waiting in the most remote and unfrequented part of it, he fancied he now beheld the unseen principal, of whom he had long entertained a kind of vague suspicion that Austin was the agent. But when, on creeping softly amongst the trees, towards the place where they stood, and hiding himself in a little thicket of laurel that was close beside it, he had an opportunity of taking a more minute survey of the person of Master Solomon, this idea instantly vanished from his mind: for his tawney, lean, and shrivelled figure so strongly resembled those natural mummies which are sometimes found in the deserts of Arabia, baked and dried by the heat of the burning sands, that Mr. Hume was utterly unable to conjecture for what purpose he could be summoned to a conference with the young and fair Rosina, unless in her hours of pious meditation she had recourse to him as a *memento mori*! and considered this living skeleton as a more striking and

and expressive emblem of mortality than the ghastly skulls with which some fair and holy sisters are wont to decorate their consecrated cells.

To Rosina, however, who now advanced with a quick pace, the figure of Solomon was too familiar to excite any astonishment. He tried to make an obeisance at her approach; but his indurated sinews revolted against this necessary act of politeness. Rosina, wishing to enter into conversation with this her destined confidante, approached him with an air of the sweetest affability; whilst Hume, who fancied he was on the point of making some notable discovery, lay panting with curiosity in his covert. This trio, so interesting to his feelings, stood some minutes without speaking, when Austin, thinking that propriety obliged him to introduce his friend to the notice of Rosina, thus began the conversation:—

“ This is Mr. Solomon Stringer, Miss. I made bould for to ax him to step over here this evening, that I might give him a few cabbage-plants, and the like.”

“ Then Mr. Solomon has a garden, I suppose,” said Rosina.

To

To this indirect question the wise man returned an assenting nod.

"Yes, a little bit of one, (said Austin;) and I tells him he has robbed the dead, for he has cabbaged it out of one corner of the church-yard. He, he, he!"

"Pray, Mr. Solomon, (said Rosina, determined, if possible, to force him into conversation,) are you married?"

Solomon shrugged his shoulders, winked his eyes, bent his brows, and shook his head at this question.

"He married! (exclaimed Austin.) Lord bless you, that would be a thing impossible. I don't believe he could be prevailed on to repeat his part of the marriage ceremony, for the lucre of the finest lady in the land."

"Why, (said Rosina,) I have had the pleasure of hearing Master Solomon repeat the responses at church in a very audible and edifying manner."

"O,

"O, but he can't otherwise chuse, (returned Austin;) that's what he gets his bread by, consider; it is a thing of course, but the other would be quite out of the way."

"Very much, indeed, (said Rosina drily.) Pray how many years have you resided in this parish?"

"Fifteen," replied Solomon.

"And have you been all that time clerk of the parish?"

"No."

"How many years have you officiated in that capacity?"

"Eleven."

"Yes; I think I remember you almost as long as I can recollect any thing."

This being an observation, required no reply.

"You

" You have a sister who resides in Dublin," said Rosina.

Solomon nodded.

" You go there sometimes."

Another nod.

" Do you intend to go there soon?"

" Peradventure," said Solomon.

Rosina finding him invincible in his taciturnity, bade him good evening, and turned towards the house, at the same moment that Solomon stalked down a walk that led in a contrary direction. Austin, however, returning from his friend, ran a few steps after Rosina, and exclaimed, in a voice loud enough to be heard by Mr. Hume, who still lay snug in his covert, " Well, Miss, how do you like Solomon? Did I not tell you he was the man for our money?"

Rosina passed on without making any reply, and Austin rejoined his friend; whilst Mr. Hume, instead

instead of deriving any satisfaction from this interesting conference, felt himself tortured with all the uneasy and disagreeable uncertainty of heightened curiosity and improbable conjecture. New clouds of mystery seemed to hover around the proceedings of Rosina, which every attempt to develop rendered still more impenetrable. For what purpose this man-mummy had been summoned to this private convention, or to what end a conversation so little interesting could conduce, was utterly beyond the flight of his imagination.—He returned to the house in augmented perplexity.

Austin, meantime, having dismissed Master Solomon, followed Rosina, and overtook her just as she left the shrubbery, and entered a wide lawn.

“ Well, Miss Rosina, (said he,) what do you think of Solomon the Wise, as the village folks calls him?”

“ I think, (said Rosina,) that if he is always as silent as at present, your secret could not possibly be entrusted to safer hands.”

“ I’ll

" I'll answer for him, (said Austin;) for even a sup in the eye, that's apt to oil the hinges of other tongues; never sets his a-wagging; and that's the thing that makes him so wise! Other folk lets in their knowledge at one ear, and out at the other, as the saying goes: but whatever he once gets in, he never lets out again, but keeps a-pondering and digesting of it in his mind."

" But, Austin, (said Rosina,) if, through imprudence, he should suffer your letters to be seen ———."

" O, as to matter of that, (cried Austin,) I don't care of a button, for they shall all be *nominous*, as they call it. I will name no names, and then nobody can make nothing out of them. Besides, I have the cogger under my thumb in another way; and, as little as he loves talking, I will make him take his bible-oath, before he sleeps, that if any body should question him in regard to your running away, he will swear he knows neither act nor part of it, no more than the babe unborn; which, you know, will be no lie for him; for, though I must let him know where to direct to me, (or else, you know, we
could

could not get his letters,) that won't tell him where you are."

"But, dear Austen, (said Rosina,) will not such a proceeding be exceedingly arbitrary? What right can you have to extort such an oath from the man?"

"O, right enough, (returned Austen, he owes me a matter of nine pounds, eleven shillings, and sixpence halfpenny, that he got out of me by dribs and drabs, at sundry times, in hard money: for, though he is so sparing-like in the way of speech, he is as crafty as the mischief in his own way, and can write you such letters as would wheedle a bird off a tree. However, I was no such fool as to let him get the money without good security; for, intending it (under favour) for your use, when I am dead and rotten in my grave, I thought it a pity to let you be cheated out of your lawful right by such riff raff: wherefore, I made him to get Darby O'Heielligan, the sexton, to join him in a bond for the money. So, if he runs rusty in any shape, I have nothing to do but threaten to prosecute him for the payment, and get him clapped up in limbo; so, you see, I have him fairly in Lob's pound;

pound; and I can tell you, he'll do a deal to curry favour with me, because he's as poor as Job, and he knows I can send him to pot when I please. And I have a great notion, Miss, that sending a man to pot is as much as to say that he is turned out of house and home, and cast out upon some dunghill, where he can find no other diversion for himself, save that of currying his hide with an old potsherd, as we read, in holy scriptures, righteous Job was fain to do."

To this commentary Rosina made no reply. Though Austin's reasonings in respect to the power which he imagined his bond authorized him to exercise over his friend Solomon, were little conformable with her ideas of equity or benevolence, the urgency of the occasion obliged her to submit without farther remonstrance or expostulation. As she approached the house, she was met by a servant, who came to inform her, that Lady Bell Beauchamp was with Mrs. Fitzosborne; and she flew with all the joyful precipitation of friendship to meet a person so high in her estimation.

C H A P.

 C H A P. XIII.

 THE NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

Can gold calm passion, or make reason shine?
 Can we dig peace or wisdom from the mine?

But some great souls, and fraught with warmth divine,
 Give gold a price, and teach its beams to shine.

YOUNG.

LADY Bell Beauchamp, though past her girl-
 ish years, was still a young and handsome
 woman. Her father, who was far advanced in
 life before he had arrived to the dignity of an earl-
 dom, and became possessed of the estate annexed
 to that dignity, had been accustomed to apologize
 for the extreme parsimony which marked his
 conduct, by haranguing, like old Nettleby, on
 the unstable and fluctuating state of human affairs.

The

The then Earl of P. to whose title and estate he was apparent heir, was old, it must be allowed, and there was little probability that the countess, who was as antient as himself, would, like a second Sarah, produce him a son in his old age: so far the chances were in his favour. But then the Countess might die, and the Earl supply himself with a more prolific helpmate, for there was nothing more common than to see old men furnished with great abundance of children by their young wives. Thus might the golden fruits of fortune be ravished from him for ever, even at the moment when they seemed just ready to drop into his mouth. Distant pastures, he remarked, looked green, for he was a mighty quoter of proverbs, notwithstanding the seal of reprobation with which those pithy sentences have been marked by the connoisseurs in the science of modern politeness, whose principles, to say the truth, he never took the trouble of studying. A bird in the hand, he observed, was worth two in the bush, and he should make a pretty devil of himself, if, whilst he waited in the expectation of dead men's shoes, he would suffer his own jerkin to run out at the elbows.

This thrifty and sententious personage had a son
and

and daughter, who would have done honour to a better father. He had long before followed a very amiable wife to the grave, and the melancholy reflexions with which he had attended the mournful solemnity were soon superseded by the agreeable calculation of the yearly expences which the decease of the defunct would enable him to save.

But, whilst he refused to abate one tittle of his parsimony an account of the title and estate of which he had every reason to hope the almost immediate possession, he suffered himself to be entirely influenced by those expectations, in respect to the establishment of his children, and publicly declared that he would never suffer them to form alliances with any families, which were not of the number of the most honourable in the kingdom,—though this declaration was by some suspected to be a politic manœuvre, contrived for the purpose of keeping off pretenders to his daughter's favour, and by that means saving himself the trouble of refusing her a portion of that wealth, which no consideration, either earthly or heavenly, could induce him to part with. And thus poor Lady Bell, then Miss Beauchamp, like the bat in the fable, a mouse with the birds, and a bird with the mice,—a commoner amongst the nobles, and noble

noble with the commoners, seemed to be an out-cast from both parties.

Her brother flew from domestic oppression to foreign climates, and formed an imprudent union with a young Italian lady, whom he seduced from a convent, and with whom, to avoid persecution and punishment, he took refuge in Switzerland, and for some years suffered all the rigours of distress and poverty. His father, when applied to, to alleviate the distresses of an unfortunate family so nearly allied to him, replied, with great composure, that, as he had chosen his own destiny, it was fit he should be permitted to enjoy it without molestation. It would be a pity he should miss of calamity, since he had taken the high road to her abode, turned vagabond, and set out, like a beggarly pilgrim, in search of her; and, to be quite certain of not missing her habitation, had taken a female partner to guide him in the right way to it: —a Papist too! No, no! not a doit of his money should ever be expended on the nourishment of a nest of young idolaters, who, if not crushed in their infancy, might one day foment discord and division in the state, and introduce heresy and schism into the holy bosom of mother-church. So far from contributing to the preservation of this
pernicious

pernicious brood, which he should esteem a crying sin against his king and country, he most devoutly prayed that they might all fall victims to the penury entailed on them by the imprudence of their parents, and be starved to death for the good of the common weal.

These pious wishes, however, took not effect. The parents, indeed, sunk under the accumulated evils of their fate, but the children, in whom the versatility of infancy precluded that deeply-corroding sorrow that preys on the sources of life, one day wept, and the next played over the graves of their parents.

Our reigning passions gain strength from our opportunities of indulging them. When this unnatural father found himself at length actually possessed of the estate and title which he had so long considered as eventually his own, far from feeling his bosom expanded to benevolence by this influx of wealth, which benevolence alone could have taught him to enjoy, his ardour for the accumulation of riches increased with the means of gratification, and domineered in his breast with augmented rapacity. His parsimony extended itself even to trifles the most contemptible, and

l'Avare of Moliere seemed no longer a fictitious character.

The vice of avarice, exhibited on the comic scene, is an object of laughter, and its fantastic tricks supply an inexhaustible source of poignant ridicule. But, viewed in another light, it seems to promise a still more fruitful subject for the tragic muse. When it becomes the scourge of nations, and leads oppression, murder, and depopulation in its train; when we behold the devastation of this horrible passion exemplified in the plunder of whole provinces, and the massacre of their innocent inhabitants,—no longer the object at which the frolic power of laughter pointed the sportive arrow, it rises to fancy armed with all the terrors of an exterminating demon; horror and desolation mark its progress; its footsteps are imprinted in blood! Imagination sickens at the view, and humanity shudders!

Is this the flight of fancy?—Would it were!

But, in better regulated societies, where the giant strides of vice are restrained by the barrier of the laws, the operations of avarice are confined to the narrower sphere of domestic oppression,
private

private fraud, extortion, and monopoly. — Such were the agents and instruments of the Earl of P. during his life, and such were the comforters who surrounded his dying couch. Two bags of gold were found sewed up in the pillow which sustained his expiring head !

“ But his heir, far from exulting in the discovery of this hidden treasure, beheld it with horror, and bathed it with floods of filial sorrow ; and, if the tears of the innocent could wash away the stains of the guilty, the soul of this wicked man would appear before the last awful tribunal white and unspotted as that of the sainted martyr.

But the piety of this excellent young woman was not confined to fruitless effusions of sorrow and regret. To console the unhappy victims of her father's rapacity, and to redress their wrongs, was now become the principal object of her attention. She could not think herself entitled to the produce of general exaction ; the wealth, which had been accumulated by the harpy hand of extortion, was dispensed with the most liberal benevolence. She flew to the retreat where she had privately supported the children of a beloved and unhappy brother, and conducted them to her own

home. He had left a son and two daughters ; but, as the marriage of their parents was not legal, they were entitled to no share of their grandfather's fortune. But laws were made for the restraint of the wicked. Were mankind to be governed by principles of innate equity, the courts of justice might be converted into churches. The liberal heart of Lady Bell acknowledged the force of obligations more sacred than any of human institution. On these three orphan children she settled one half of the possessions of which she still remained mistress; and conscious of the deceitfulness of the human heart, thus wisely placed it beyond the power of fortune to render her ungenerous or unjust.

What remained of a fortune, thus divided and mutilated by voluntary retribution, still supplied her with an elegant abundance,—with a capacity of enjoying her own life, and of rendering that of others agreeable.

But, though Lady Bell was too much of a heroine in generosity greatly to excite the admiration of the men of rank, with whom fortune had now placed her on a level, who did not in general greatly approve her arithmetic in the divisions
and

and subdivisions she had made of her property: there were, nevertheless, some amongst them who would willingly have undertaken the management of the remainder of it. But, so recently emancipated from the yoke of one tyrant, she was fearful of encountering the chain of another. Uncontrolled in her inclinations, blest with affluence adequate to the gratification of every reasonable desire, happy in the approbation of her own heart, and the applauses of the virtuous, her bosom experienced no unsatisfied desire, "no craving void."

How many are driven by the burdensome tedium of unoccupied leisure to seek relief in a diversity of situation! Thousands have been conducted by mere ennui to the temple of Hymen; but a lively imagination, a cultivated mind, and a good flow of animal spirits, prevented the mind of Lady Bell from ever sinking into satiety, and the social affections of her soul expanded themselves in an innocent fondness for her adopted children, and a more than ordinary glow of friendship for the persons she found particularly worthy her esteem. — Amongst this chosen number, Mrs. Fitzosborne and Rosina held the highest rank. She possessed a very elegant villa in their neighbourhood, where

she usually resided. The house was beautifully situated, and the apartments spacious and commodious; but the furniture was neat and simple, and her equipages plain and convenient. This pleasing residence was surrounded by every charm of nature. The mansion, the demesne, the manners of this amiable family, plain in their appearance, unassuming in their demeanour, seemed to recall to the imagination that happy combination of dignity, elegance, and simplicity, which we are apt to attribute in idea to the inhabitants of the golden age, or the descendants of the antient patriarchs.

Whilst Rosina embraced Lady Bell, she ardently wished to make her the confidante of her intended elopement. On her probity and honour she knew she might implicitly rely, but she was deterred by the fear of her disapprobation.

After tea, Mrs. Fitzosborne sent Rosina to walk with Lady Bell in the garden.

“But, my dear Rosina, (said Lady Bell, as soon as they were alone,) why are you thus altered and dejected? I expected to find you all spirits and gaiety, now that your lover is on the point of returning to you.”

“My

"My lover!—Ah, Lady Bell!"

"Yes, my dear, all the world gives Hector Fitzosborne to you for a lover, and he cannot have so little gallantry as to revoke the donation. I have been foretelling this match since you were both children, and I hope you have more respect for me than to falsify my predictions."

"But, dear Lady Bell, you know Mr. Fitzosborne's violent aversion to the idea of such a connexion."

"Yes, but I also know Mrs. Fitzosborne's as violent prepossession in its favour."

"But, after all, is it not very possible that Hector Fitzosborne, on his arrival, may feel for me the utmost indifference?"

"Very possible, I allow; but, all circumstances considered, not at all probable."

"I am not ignorant (said Rosina) of the unbounded partiality of my friend, and her influence over the feelings of a son, by whom she is so tenderly beloved. Would it not then be more pru-

dent, as well as more generous, in me, to withdraw from a family to which I owe such infinite obligation, than to stay to embroil it, by my presence, in disturbance and dissention?"

"That, you know, (said Lady Bell,) is out of the question. Mrs. Fitzosborne never will suffer you to leave her. How far she may be justifiable in detaining you in her family, in direct opposition to the inclination of her husband, I am not qualified to determine; but I know, that, if Hector on his return should wish to make you his wife, it will be an arbitrary stretch of parental authority in his father to endeavour to prevent him. You want nothing but money, and of that he will himself have enough. At twenty-one the law makes a man master of his property; at twenty-four it is hard if he may not be allowed to be the proprietor of his inclinations. You have nothing to do but to let things take their course. — How I shall rejoice to witness the mortification of Fitzosborne! for I know his antipathy to your union with his son arises, in a great measure, from his pretty plan of marrying him to that little, worthless, insignificant animal, Lady Flora."

Rosina, thus discouraged by the sentiments of Lady Bell, felt the folly of revealing to her a plan which

which it would be impossible to persuade her to approve, and therefore determined to confine it to her own bosom, ardently as she wished for assistance and advice. Their conversation was interrupted by the approach of Mr. and Mrs. Fitzosborne, and Mr. Hume. Rosina, to whom some of this company was extremely disagreeable, quitted them, and walked towards the house.

CHAP. XIV.

THE NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

MR. Fitzosborne, (said Lady Bell,) when I was last in town, I had the pleasure of being in company with your fair ward, Lady Flora."

"Well, madam, I hope her ladyship is well," said Fitzosborne.

H 5

"To

"To confess the truth, as she is not in my catalogue of favourites, I made no enquiry I believe, or, if I did, as it was only for form's sake, I gave no attention to her reply; though I now recollect I never saw her look so ill in my life.— Sometimes I have thought her rather pretty, but she was that night downright ordinary."

"Rather pretty! (repeated Mr. Fitzosborne.) I believe Lady Flora is generally allowed to be very handsome."

"They must be very singular in their ideas of beauty, who think so, (said Lady Bell.) Have you ever seen her, Mr. Hume?"

"Not that I can recollect, madam; but I never heard that her ladyship was any thing remarkable."

"I believe not, indeed! However, she would be passible enough, if it were not for her insufferable insipidity. It would have been a charity, Mrs. Fitzosborne, to have kept her here with you a little longer: the conversation of that lovely Rosina of your's must have been eminently useful

to her, if she is in the least degree susceptible of improvement."

"I did hear (said Hume) that her ladyship was rather in the milk and water style."

"I do not see in what respect she is deficient, (said Mr. Fitzosborne :) I think she is sufficiently accomplished for a young lady of her high birth and large fortune."

"That is, (said Lady Bell,) you are of opinion that her high birth and large fortune supersede the necessity for elegant accomplishment and intellectual improvement."

"You are very prompt in your conclusions, madam," said Fitzosborne.

"Why, (said Lady Bell, smiling,) I only imputed to you an opinion which will have the suffrage of half the men of fashion in the kingdom. I dare say Lady Flora will not be long on your hands."

"No, no, (said Hume;) this is not an age for so airy and empty a commodity as love to prepon-

derate against the substantial advantages annexed to the possession of riches. Throw all the loves and graces that those extravagant dogs, the painters and poets ever lavished on their self-created divinities into one scale, and Lady Flora's golden ore into the other, you will see the former will soon kick the beam, and the loves and graces be sent to flutter through those airy regions where they were first engendered."

"Then you allow nothing for poor Lady Flora herself," said Mrs. Fitzosborne.

"O yes! her ladyship shall be tossed into the scale by way of a make-weight."

"For shame! (said Lady Bell, laughing) this is treating her poor little ladyship with great indignity, and absolutely degrading her to the level of a farthing candle."

"Why, (said Mr. Hume,) I have no reason to suppose her to be a very brilliant luminary."

"Nay, but you might have chosen a metaphor somewhat less disrespectful," said Lady Bell.

"It

"It is the better suited to the rest of the conversation, methinks," said Mr. Fitzosborne, with an air of displeasure.

"Oh, indeed? (said Lady Bell,) when Mr. Hume, after having ransacked heaven and earth for similies, condescends to borrow his allusions from the shelves of a huckster's shop, it is high time to change the conversation."

Lady Bell soon afterwards took her leave. Mrs. Fitzosborne retired to write letters, which she meant to send by Rosina; and Rosina, glad to find herself at liberty, shut herself up in her own apartment. The painful reflexions which, during the day, had in some measure been silenced by the hurry of her employments, now recurred to her mind with new violence. She felt astonished at the boldness of the resolution she had formed, and shuddered at the rashness of the enterprize she was on the point of undertaking. Her reveries were interrupted by a message from Mr. Fitzosborne, who desired to speak with her in the drawing-room. She was at a loss to divine the business of this interview, which, disagreeable as it must necessarily be, she could not with decency decline. Consoling herself, however, with the reflection

that

that it would be the last, she descended the stairs with a throbbing heart.

She found Mr. Hume with Mr. Fitzosborne. The latter still wore the air of complaisant affability, which, for his own reasons, he had that day thought it politic to assume.

"As you are going to town, Miss Mortimer, (said he,) I shall take the liberty of troubling you with a few commissions."

Rosina coldly desired him to favour her with his directions.

"If you will wait here a moment, (said he,) I will just step into the library, and write a memorandum of them: it would be rather too troublesome to burden your memory with them."

He left the room as he spoke; and Rosina, who instantly perceived that she had been summoned to this parley in consequence of a plan preconcerted between the gentlemen, turned to a piano-forte, and began to look over some music that laid scattered on it, as if in the intention of selecting something to play. Mr. Hume approached her.

"Much

“Much as I admire Miss Mortimer’s performance, (said he,) at present, when accident has favoured me with the opportunity I have so long ardently wished for, and vainly sought, of entertaining her alone. She will forgive me if I am more solicitous to speak than to listen.”

“Well, Sir, (said Rosina, turning from the instrument, although I should suppose the conversations which have already passed between us had left nothing for you to add or me to hear, whatever you wish to say, I am willing to attend to it.”

Hume, though by no means deficient in assurance, felt disconcerted by her firmness.

“You are now, madam, (said he, with some hesitation,) on the eve of leaving this place; and before your return to it, my business will call me also away; if not my business, at least my inclination will force me to leave it; for how, in your absence, can I support the scenes where I have so long been blessed with your society!”

Rosina smiled sarcastically.

“I

"I see (resumed Hume) that my professions are despised, and my sincerity distrusted. What shall I say? what shall I do? (continued he, approaching more nearly, and catching her hand,) obdurate as thou art, to convince thee of the truth and fervor of the heart that adores thee!"

"Nothing!" said Rosina, coldly withdrawing her hand.

"Nothing!" repeated Hume.

"If, Sir, (said Rosina,) my good opinion is really of consequence to you, you will endeavour to retrieve it by divesting yourself of manners that are disagreeable, and by laying aside pretensions that are irksome to me. What reason have I had to alter my sentiments, since I not long since so explicitly avowed them to you?"

"Yet, madam, you once seemed to think my pretensions merited some consideration."

"True, Sir, and therefore I bestowed it on them. As I was not precipitate in my determination, you have the less reason to be surpris'd at finding it irrevocable."

Hume

Hume bit his lip: he would have been angry, if he had dared, but his policy surmounted his resentment.

“ Deceived by false appearances, (said he,) you have formed hasty and injurious conclusions. If I might but have permission to explain what may have appeared equivocal in my conduct.—”

“ And wherefore, (interrupted Rosina,) predetermined as I am, wherefore should you take the trouble of entering into such a vindication ?”

“ It is true, madam, (said Hume,) from the decisions of predetermined prejudice there is no appeal, and yet, (walking about the room,) it is hard, very hard !——”

“ What is hard, Mr. Hume ? (replied Rosina.) Is it hard that on a point of such infinite importance I should take the liberty of consulting the feelings of my own heart ? Is it hard, that, in compliance with their dictates, I decline an union with a man against whose duplicity of conduct those feelings powerfully revolt ? Is it hard, in a word, that I prefer my own happiness to what you may be pleased to consider as your advantage ?”

“ Your

"Your own happiness, madam ! (said Hume, in extreme chagrin,) would but your prejudices allow you to perceive the road that leads to it, might, perhaps, be far better secured by the connexion in which I have wished to engage you, than by an adherence to the chimerical projects which at present engross your attention."

Rosina perceived that this hint alluded to her supposed expectation of an union with young Fitzosborne.

"Whatever may be my prevailing plans, (she replied with spirit,) to you, Sir, I am certainly not obliged to account for them; and it is not vanity to suppose that I am at least as competent to judge of the means best calculated to secure my own happiness, as you can be to point them out to me."

"Yet, madam, (said Hume, with increased vexation,) had Mr. Fitzosborne no son whose return is immediately expected, you might perhaps condescend to the adoption of other means."

Rosina smiled disdainfully, but replied not.

Mr.

Mr. Fitzosborne, who had purposely created a pretext for giving Hume, who relied rather too much on his own powers of persuasion, this private opportunity of conversing with Rosina, had gone no farther than the outside of the door; and now judging, from the tones of their voices, for their words he could hear but indistinctly, that they were not likely to come to any amicable compromise, he re-entered the room, and, looking at Hume, beheld his features bursting with the spirit of repressed resentment. Rosina arose at his entrance, and asked for his commands. He turned from her as she stood, expecting his reply. She repeated her words, impatient to be gone.

"Miss Mortimer, (said he, turning suddenly towards her with an angry and menacing air,) this is no time for trifling! I find you have repeated your rejection of Mr. Hume."

Rosina made no answer.

"In your refusal of Mr. Nettleby, (continued he,) imprudent as it was in a situation such as your's, your folly admitted, at least, of extenuation; but, in declining the favour Mr. Hume has intended you, no excuse can be found for it. It
is

is not, I suppose, his age, his ugliness, or his oddities, that deter you from his alliance."

"Age, ugliness, and singularity, (said Rosina,) are not to be considered as crimes. Any other disadvantages, which may tend to preclude affection in the wedded state, are as greatly to be dreaded, and as sedulously to be shunned."

"And pray, (replied Fitzosborne, ironically,) what are those disadvantages, on the part of Mr. Hume, which prevent him from having the happiness of finding favour in your eyes? I would recommend to your perusal the fable of the dog and the shadow, and to your consideration, the preposterous vanity of losing a substantial and permanent advantage, by grasping at a visionary felicity."

"I understand your allusion, Sir, (said Rosina.) An alliance with your son is the visionary felicity of which I am accused of aspiring to, and on this subject I have already been treated with sufficient indignity. But be assured, that, were that son to resemble his father, sooner would I wander a houseless mendicant through the world, and solicit the cold hand of charity for a scanty subsistence,

subsistence, than unite myself to a man, no less destitute of decency and hospitality, than of every principle of humanity and compassion."

"It is well, madam!" said Fitzosborne.

"No, Sir, it is not well! (said Rosina, who, conscious that she had no longer any measures to keep, endeavoured not to repress the flame of indignation that had so long been smothered by prudence in her bosom,) it is not well to insult an unhappy orphan, to treat with cruel and unmerited indignity, a person who never injured you!"

"If you meditate an injury, (said Fitzosborne,) the case is not much altered."

"I meditate no injury, (replied Rosina,) though I perhaps possess the power of hurting you, had I the inclination: but reason and propriety assign me a different conduct,—a conduct with which I have repeatedly assured you you should have reason to be satisfied, for no treatment on your part, however unworthy, can authorize on mine a breach of gratitude and duty. To you, Mr. Hume, (continued she, turning towards him, with a softened air, and weeping as she spoke,) I have perhaps

perhaps expressed myself with too much severity, for you have given me no just reason to be offended; if I have, I entreat you will forgive me:—but, persecuted, baited with scorn and derision, wounded, irritated, as I have been, reduced to an alternative that appears dreadful, I scarcely know what I say.”

“To what alternative are you reduced? (said Hume, who, exceedingly softened by her tears and gentleness, approached her with great tenderness,) why are you thus agitated? Oh! if I could prevail on you to give me a legal title to protect you, no mortal breathing should distress you with impunity!”

“I have already (said Rosina, more coldly) acquainted you with my final determination, and have only to regret that it was not couched in terms more gentle.”

She arose, and retired; but the most arduous of her trials was still to be supported,—her parting interview with Mrs. Fitzosborne.

CHAP. XV.

THE NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

WHILST Rosina still shuddered with apprehension at the idea of her approaching separation from her friend, she entered her apartment.

“Here (said Mrs. Fitzosborne) are the letters I have been writing, and here is a list of my commissions, and the ticket, which will supply you with money to execute them; and I entreat you will for once divest of your usual frugality, and equip yourself with every thing that may be necessary for the gala with which I intend to celebrate my son’s return.”

Rosina sighed heavily.

“But,

"But, dearest Rosina, (continued Mrs. Fitzosborne,) why this gloomy dejection, this obstinate despondency?"

"I have no mind, (said Rosina, whose heart fainted at the idea of the enterprize she was on the point of embarking in, and who fancied she would incur no inconvenience of any kind by deferring its execution for a few days,) "I have no mind to go to-morrow."

"How childish is this irresolution! (said Mrs. Fitzosborne;) have you forgotten all the wise lectures with which, even from your infancy, I have endeavoured to guard and fortify your mind against this weak inconsistency, which is the most prevailing and dangerous foible of our sex?"

"I have never forgotten them, (said Rosina,) and you shall be convinced that I have not."

"I hoped (said Mrs. Fitzosborne) that I had made you a little heroine."

"Would to heaven I was one! (said Rosina;) but I will go, since you desire it."

"I

"I desire it, my dear Rosina, because I think this little excursion will contribute to raise your dejected spirits, and make you more happy."

"I think it will," said Rosina.

"Why, then, (resumed Mrs. Fitzosborne,) should you wish to defer it?"

"I will not defer it: I will conquer this weakness. I will convince, you that the precepts which have so often and so powerfully enforced the practice of fortitude and magnanimity, have not been lost on me."

"One would imagine (said Mrs. Fitzosborne, extremely surprised at this weak uncertainty in Rosina, in whom she had hitherto remarked a firmness and energy of mind greatly superior to her years,) one would imagine, that, on so trivial an occasion, it would be unnecessary to recollect them."

"Alas! (said Rosina, bursting into tears, and throwing her arms round her friend,) I cannot estimate as trivial any necessity that obliges me to leave you."

Mrs. Fitzosborne soothed, and endeavoured to argue Rosina out of a weakness, which, unconscious as she was of the motive in which it originated, appeared inconsistent, even to absurdity.

A servant came to inform them supper was on the table.

“I do not ask you to come down with me, (said Mrs. Fitzosborne,) you are not now fit to be seen.”

“No, (said Rosina;) as I must rise early, I will go immediately to bed.”

“Well, then, (said Mrs. Fitzosborne, embracing her tenderly as she spoke,) God bless and protect you, my sweet Rosina, we shall meet no more!”

She hastily quitted the room as she spoke.

“We shall meet no more!” These words inadvertently uttered, and obvious in their signification, seemed to dart, like an ice-bolt, to the heart of Rosina. Cold and motionless as a statue, she received the parting embrace of her friend, without

without the ability to return it. For several minutes she stood fixed to the same spot, her ideas all wandering in a desolate and melancholy confusion, similar to that dreary wildness which pervades the distracted and feverish imagination of the visionary sufferer, whose pillow bodily infirmity or mental disquietude has planted with thorns.

She endeavoured to rouse herself from her stupefaction, but still those ill-boding words, "we shall meet no more," returned with a superstitious horror to her imagination, and sent back the blood to her scarcely palpitating heart.

To conceal her secret from Mrs. Fitzosborne had required the utmost exertion of her self-command. She felt that, on another interview, an emotion too powerful to be combated would betray her, and, determined to put her fortitude to no unnecessary trial, hastily threw herself into bed.

After she had been two hours in bed, some one entered the room, and softly approached the bed. By the step and breathing she knew that it was Mrs. Fitzosborne. She gently opened the curtains,

tains, and leaned over Rosina, who, repressing her emotion, feigned herself asleep: bending down, she kissed her cheek, and, whispering a short but fervent prayer for her preservation, softly withdrew.

Rosina started from her bed as her friend quitted her room. She followed her to the door; her heart was wrung by agonizing sensations; she seemed to shudder on the brink of a precipice: her feelings revolted against the determination she had formed; her intended elopement arose to her imagination, surrounded with peril and dismay. She laid her hand on the lock of the door, in the intention of recalling her friend, and confessing to her, and relinquishing her rash design. Oh! had she obeyed the impulses of her heart at that moment, how many subsequent pangs would have been spared to her bosom! Just then she heard the voice of Fitzosborne in the corridor, who spoke to his servant in retiring to his chamber. She recoiled at the sound; it revived all her indignation; the moment of sensibility was past, and the pride of resentment triumphed over the dictates of tenderness.

"Yes,

"Yes, (said she,) I will go, I will fulfil my promises, so repeatedly given! Fitzosborne, you shall be be satisfied! Now triumph in the success of your barbarity, exult in the banishment of her whom you detested! Merciful heaven! is this, then, the last night I must repose beneath this roof, which has so often protected my pure and innocent slumbers!"

She flew to the window, and opening the shutters, looked around her with a wild eagerness.—The moon, obscured at intervals by flying clouds, threw a transient and fluctuating light over the prospect.

"Adieu, (she cried,) beloved retreats of my happy and thoughtless infancy! Sweet scenes, that have witnessed my childish innocence and childish tranquillity, adieu! — Ah! where shall I now wander? what dangers may I not encounter? — But, wherefore this apprehension! this weak distrust of the protection of the Almighty! Will he, who disdains not to bend his paternal eye on the meanest of his creatures, reject the supplications of an unhappy but guiltless orphan? Is not the whole creation pervaded by his presence?"

“ Wrapp’d in his essence, I his power adore !”

“ Should I perish in the dangerous element, on which I am on the point of embarking, is not his spirit in the troubled waters ? Can the steel of the assassin reach my heart, unless the Almighty nerves the arm that deals the deadly blow ? Let guilt then fear.

———— Tremble, thou wretch !

Thou perjured, and thou simular of justice !

“ The seraphic form of innocence, like the heaven-commissioned angel that guided the Hebrew brethren through the burning furnace, shall conduct her favoured votaries safe and unhurt amidst the fiery ordeal of the world !”

But Rosina's metaphor held not good ; for, though the adherents of virtue may bear the innate probity of their hearts unconsumed and unfullied through the dangerous trial, unlike the Hebrew brethren, on whom, we read, “ the fire had no power,” their feelings will be sorely scorched and singed ; deep and painful scars will be left smarting in their bosoms, and the triumph of victory too often forgotten in the anguish of the wounds it was purchased by.

In

In such reflexions Rosina passed the night, and watched with increased anxiety the dawn of the morning that was to separate her from every thing she loved.

“ All her preparations were made. Her waiting-woman fancied she was to accompany her to town; but Rosina, telling her that she should continue there but a very short time, declined her attendance, and threw herself into the carriage.— She turned her weeping eyes backwards, and, like Mahala, when she entered the untrodden-desert, sent back her wishes and her prayers to the habitation she abandoned.

CHAP. XVI.

THE NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

A DISAGREEABLE ENCOUNTER.

AS Belle-Vue was not more than nineteen miles from Dublin, she arrived in town about ten o'clock; and, instead of driving to the house of the lady to whom it was Mrs. Fitzosborne's intention she should make this visit, she desired the postillion would set her down at the house of a mantua-maker in Grafton-street, to whom she and Mrs. Fitzosborne had long been customers.

She told Mrs. Fleming, the mantua-maker, who received her with the officious civility of
vulgar

vulgar courtesy, that she had left the country to transact some business, and execute some commissions, which she said she could not manage with equal ease and unrestraint in the house of any friend who was at present in town, and therefore begged her to accommodate her with an apartment for a day or two; which Mrs. Fleming very readily promised to do.

Determined to sail in the first packet that went out, she awaited with impatience the arrival of Austin, whom she had appointed to meet her at this place. He came, however, before she had finished her breakfast, and sent up a message to her, as previously agreed on, that he was come to know whether she had any goods to be sent off to the country. Rosina saw him alone, and gave him directions to make enquiries at the packet-house without loss of time. Resolving, at the same time, to neglect no instance of attention which it was yet in her power to evince to her friend, she sent for a chair, determined to execute as many of her commissions as the time she had to remain in Dublin would allow her. She gave Austin the ticket, with directions to receive the money for it, and meet her there again at one o'clock. At the moment when she was stepping

into the chair, she was exceedingly shocked to see old Nettleby crossing the street within two yards of her. She held down her head; and getting hastily into the chair, the men, who had already received their directions, carried her away instantly, whilst the old gentleman, who thought he knew her, but was rather doubtful on account of the imperfection of his optics, and the improbability of her being in town at that time, made a full stop, and stood for some minutes looking after her; then turning to Mrs. Fleming, who had attended Rosina to the door, and had not yet re-entered the house, he enquired whether the lady in the chair was not Miss Mortimer. Mrs. Fleming replied that she was.

“ Pray, (said he,) can you inform me whether Mrs. Fitzosborne is in town ? ”

Which question Mrs. Fleming answered in the negative.

“ It is a strange thing, (said he,) what could bring this girl to town by herself ! ”

“ I really know nothing of the matter, Sir, (said Mrs. Fleming, whom Nettleby's rusty black coat

coat and old brown wig had inspired with no high degree of respect.) I suppose if the young lady had not business, she would not have come; for my own part, I have a great deal too much to do of my own, to mind other people's affairs;—so good morrow to you, Sir.”

She turned on her heel to enter the house; but just then, Austin, who had waited in the hall to enwrap the ticket Rosina had committed to his charge in no less than seven folds of paper, before he deposited it in his leathern purse, now made his appearance on the steps, to the mutual consternation of himself and Mr. Nettleby. Recollecting himself, he made a bow, and would have passed on.

Suspicion once conceived is not easily eradicated; and often, when it seems to have faded entirely from the mind, it only slumbers, and a trifling incident suffices to awaken it. The interview of the temple now recurred to the old gentleman's recollection with renewed distrust.

“What, (said he,) are you in town too! And pray what brings you here?”

"A little matter of business, Sir, (said Austin, hesitating in great confusion,) that I am going about in a great hurry; and so I wish your honour a good day."

"And pray may I ask you, what is this mighty business that you are in such a hurry about?"

"Lord, Sir, (said Mrs. Fleming, who perceived that these interrogations were not very agreeable to Austin,) Lord, Sir, I wonder you can detain the honest man, when he tells you he has got other matters to mind! I am sure he is, and must be in a very great hurry, for I heard his young lady directing him to make all the dispatch in the world to meet her again. I wonder more than any thing in the world, what call some people can have to pry into other people's affairs!"

"Why don't you practise, as well as preach, gossip? (said the old gentleman.) I dare say you have business of your own to mind, though you stand there prating about matters that in no wise concern you."

"Aye, and that I have, no thanks to you for it, as good business as any person of my profession need

need to wish for. I have the honour of making cloaths for the Countess of ——."

"Well, well, get you in and baste your tails, and stitch your fardingales! Go, get you in, housewife, and let the passengers have peace as they pass your door. I don't want to be deafened with your harangues, pestered with a long catalogue of your great customers, and worried with all that my lady what d'ye call her and the countess of thingummy said to you the last time you were trying on their mantuas. Be so good as to march into your house; and, shutting the door decently after you, leave this man and me to settle our business by ourselves in quietness."

"Did any one ever hear the like! (exclaimed Mrs. Fleming.) If I happen to like the outside of my own house better than the inside of my own house, I don't know who shall hinder me from standing at the door of my own house. That's a liberty my Lord Mayor himself could not deprive me of."

"Yes, but he could, though! for by virtue of his office he has a right to remove all nuisances from the streets: and I am ready to make oath
before

before him, upon the Holy Evangelists, that you are a very great one. Nuisance, *noyementum*, the learned Blackstone divides into two classes, public and private. Now, as you are of that notorious and public kind which works harm and annoyance to his Majesty's subjects on his high-way, you are more immediately cognizable to the jurisdiction of the said magistrate. Would to Heaven, that the Lord Mayor, and other scavengers of the legislation, would avail themselves of their authority, and apply their besoms to sweep all such trumpery trash out of this our metropolis !”

“ O preposterous ! (exclaimed Mrs. Fleming ;) was the like ever heard before ! To be abused in such an abominable manner by a little, old, beggarly, ferret-eyed, weazle-faced devil ! I am sure I cannot for the life of me conceive or imagine what call you could have to the family of Mr. Fitzosborne, unless they fed you with an alms for charity. And then to call my Lord Mayor a scavenger ! It is almost as bad as treason, as one may say.”

“ Sir, (said Austin,) being that I am in a manner a little pressed for time, having a deal of things to buy, such as tools and garden-seeds, and the like,

like, that I wants to send off by the cars. I beg you will have me excused, if I goes about my business."

"And was that the business that brought you to town?"

"And a very good business too, methinks," said Mrs. Fleming.

"Peace, brawler, peace! (exclaimed Nettleby.) And had you no other business? On what account are you to meet that girl?"

"That girl! (repeated Mrs. Fleming.) Why he's to come back here, to receive Miss Mortimer's orders about the things she has to send to the country. What other business could a working man, like him, have with a fine young lady like Miss Mortimer!"

"That's more than I know, (said Nettleby.) So you say Miss Mortimer is to meet you here again?"

"Lord save us and keep us, (cried Mrs. Fleming,) what a cross-examining you keep! The honest

honest man said no such thing. What could bring Miss Mortimer here again! If she has any further commands to favour me with, it is a great deal more likely she may send for me to the house of some person of quality, where she will take up her abode during her ——."

"Go to hell, you and your persons of quality! (exclaimed the old gentleman in a rage.) What the devil are they to me, that I should be worried and baited with them!"

"Not much indeed, I believe, (said Mrs. Fleming. I am sure, from your behaviour, you are nothing a-kin to any thing that's decent. Let alone quality ——."

"O, thou everlasting brawler! Xantippe was surely thy prototype. Hast thou ever a husband?"

"What is it to you whether I have or not. I am sure I would rather live to be as fusty as old nick, and as grey as a badger, than take up with such a little *contankrous* iron-faced devil as you for a husband!"

"I thy

"I thy husband, diabolical termagant! Sooner would I break my neck by a voluntary flight from the Tarpeian rock, (if you know what that is,) than thrust it into a matrimonial noose, to be linked to such an infernal vixen!"

"I know, (replied Mrs. Fleming, whose choler rose in proportion to his own,) that another sort of noose would be a great deal fitter for it: and as to that Carpean rock, wherever it is, it would be serving you as you deserve, if somebody would pitch you from top to bottom of it, and break, not only your neck, but every other bone in your old shrivelled skin into the bargain, to punish you for your impudence and impertinence. But I am a fool to be standing wasting my time on the likes of you!"

So saying, she entered the house without ceremony, and clapped the door in his face. He turned to address Austin, but found himself entirely alone; for the good man having observed, that, during the latter part of the contention, Mrs. Fleming had entirely engrossed Mr. Nettleby's attention, contrived to make his escape between two carriages, and got off unperceived.

This

This flight of Austin greatly contributed to strengthen his suspicions, though by this time he was inclined to adopt the opinion first broached by Mr. Hume, and consider the old man as the agent of some principal who had not yet appeared upon the scene. And it also appeared evident to him, that the busy and loquacious mantua-maker was privy to the conspiracy, of whatever nature it might be. He walked slowly onwards, and went into the first coffee-house he came to, to ruminate at leisure on the measures which the exigency of the occasion might require him to adopt.

Rosina returned to Grafton-street at one o'clock, and found Austin already there, awaiting her arrival, to report to her the success of his embassy. After having counted the money he had received for her with great deliberation and exactness, and put her in possession of it, he proceeded to inform her, that he had been at the packet-house, and had learned there, that the packet for Holy-Head would sail at eight o'clock next morning; and that, if she determined to go in it, her trunks must be sent on board that day. He added, that in the course of his enquiries on George's Quay, he had met an old acquaintance, whom he had left in London fifteen years before, and that it was
merely

merely by accident they recollected each other; that this person was become Captain of a Bristol trader; and hearing his enquiries relative to the packet, had offered him a passage in his own vessel, which would be ready to sail with the next morning's tide. Austin had told his friend, the Captain, that he had a young woman under his care, and that he could not give him a decisive answer until he had consulted her. He had therefore appointed the Captain to meet him at three o'clock, and in the meantime returned to acquaint Rosina with this offer, and know her opinion of it.

Rosina did not hesitate a moment in determining to embrace this proposal. Her wishes had always pointed her to some romantic vale in Wales, not only on account of the natural beauties of the place, but from its vicinity to Ireland; for she could not resolve to remove to any considerable distance from a place to which her thoughts and wishes would incessantly return. She therefore desired Austin would immediately return to the Captain, agree with him for their passage, and lose no time in getting their luggage, the chief part of which lay at the house of Solomon's sister, on board. She had sent thither a trunk filled with books and materials for working and drawing; and

and some time before her departure from Belle-Vue, she had sent her harp, which was her favourite instrument, to town, to be new strung, so that she had nothing now to do, but to get her things carried on board, as she knew she might supply herself in Bristol with any necessaries she should have occasion for in her retirement.

Austin alarmed her a good deal with his account of his rencounter with the old gentleman; and Mrs. Fleming gave him a circumstantial relation of their conversation in the street.

“ I am very sorry, (said Rosina,) that he happened to see me !”

“ Then you know him, Ma’am ?” said Mrs. Fleming.

“ Very well,” said Rosina.

“ To be sure, Ma’am, if I had known he had the honour of your acquaintance, I should have treated him in another guess manner. But upon my credit, Ma’am, the gentleman talked in so strange a manner, that I could make neither head nor tail of it; calling my Lord Mayor a scavenger, and

and saying that it was his business to sweep the rubbish out of the streets with a besom. I protest, Ma'am, you can have no notion of the rigs he ran, without you were to hear him."

"I have often heard him," said Rosina.

"And then, Ma'am, he abused me in such a manner, that the dogs would not pick my bones; for no one individual thing, Ma'am, but because he saw I was not willing to let him keep hampering the poor man with his roundabout questions, when I knew that he had got other fish to fry, and wanted to go about your business, Ma'am. I protest he flew into such a rage, that you would think he was neither to tie nor to hold, and talked about breaking his neck down some great high rock or other. Upon my credit, Ma'am, it ran strangely in my head, that he was a little beside himself."

"And I believe he is so," said Rosina.

"To tell you the truth, Ma'am, that was the very thing that struck me; for he grinned so, and made such frightful faces, and called me some out-of-the-way name; now I cannot for the life of me recollect what it was, but I know there was *tippy* to

to the end of it. I suppose it was all as one as jade or huffey; and tormented the man to such a degree, that if I had not been there to keep him in play a little, I don't know what would have become of the poor old soul, for he really seemed quite at a non plus; and you would have died with laughing, if you had seen how he took to his heels, and scampered away, as soon as the old tyger (I beg your pardon, Ma'am; the old gentleman, for, having the honour of your acquaintance, to be sure he must needs be a gentleman,) as soon as the old gentleman faced about, and turned at me."

"I entreat, good Mrs. Fleming, (said Rosina,) that you will give orders that I may be denied, not only to him, but to any other person who may enquire for me here to-day; (she knew that there was no probability that any one but Nettleby, or some of his emissaries, would enquire for her;) for you know, when one is engaged in business, it is exceedingly disagreeable to be interrupted."

"That I do, to my cost, Ma'am; no one can tell more of that matter than I; though, to be sure, when a body is interrupted by them that they are to get any thing by, it is quite a different thing. But I declare to you, Ma'am, I never can say a single

single moment of my life is my own; for may be, just at the moment that I am sitting down with my family to eat a mouthful of dinner, (and I have no great appetite at the best of times,—the full of an egg-shell would suffice me any day of the year,) just as I am sitting down to my morsel, in comes a footman, with a message from some lady of quality or other; and, wet or dry, off I must trapes that moment to the other end of the town. And then, the ladies always defer their directions till the very last minute; yet they make no allowances, but expect people to sit up night and day, until their work is finished."

"That is very unreasonable, indeed," said Rosina.

"Yes, indeed, Ma'am, so it is very unreasonable, and hard upon poor folks that gets their own bread. But that's not half so bad as my Lady Dowager Tygrony, that sent for me the Saturday before the last birth-night, which, you may remember, Ma'am, was on a Monday, for I dare say you were at the Castle?"

No, indeed, (said Rosina,) I was not."

"Why,

“ Why, so I thought, Ma’am, or else I should have had the honour of making your suit. But, as I was telling you, Ma’am, her ladyship sent for me; and only think of it, Ma’am! she had the conscience to want me to work all day a Sunday at her castle-suit. But I told her ladyship I had a soul to be saved as well as my betters: it was enough for me to make a beast of burden of myself, six days out of seven, and little enough in all conscience to have one day in the week to do my duty, go to church morning and evening, and see after my salvation; for you know, Ma’am, as the Scripture says, ‘ What does it profit a man, if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?’ To be sure, I have lost an excellent customer; for her ladyship was so disobliged, that she declared I should never set a stitch for her whilst she lived, and said she had no notion of tradespeople being so impertinent as to pester people with their qualms of conscience. Now, Ma’am, I leave it to you, if this was not very unreasonable?”

“ Very unreasonable, indeed,” said Rosina.

“ Not but she found them that were not so scrupulous. Money can do a great deal, Ma’am; and I am sure I ought to think as much of it as another,

another, being a widow with five small children. But ill gotten, ill gone, was always my notion. They say it is happy for the child whose father goes to hell: but if a man goes to hell himself, I think he'll be in a fair way to bring his children there after him. Lord preserve us! And it is my maxim, Ma'am, that it is better to give our children decent learning and a religious education, suppose there is not quite so much to be had at the shaking of the bag."

"Undoubtedly," said Rosina.

"To be sure, many of my neighbours may be able to give better fortunes to their children; but, for my own part ———."

Rosina, who felt herself in a situation pretty similar to that of the man who stood on the banks of the river, waiting until its waters should be all passed by, was at length obliged to interrupt that torrent of loquacity, which would otherwise have flowed on for ever."

"I am in great pain for you, Mrs. Fleming, (said she;) I am sure I must be very troublesome to you, and detain you from your business."

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But

But her efforts to stop the rapidity of the current, only diverted it into another channel.

“ Oh, not in the least, Ma’am, I assure you: it is quite a treat to me, to have the honour of conversing with you a little; for, though you may think I only say it out of flattery, you were always a very particular favourite of mine.”

“ I thank you for your favourable opinion, (said Rosina.) I hope you wo’n’t forget to give orders that I may be denied.”

“ O, never fear, Ma’am. I’ll engage you shall be as snug and quiet here, as if you were shut up in a nunnery: for there’s not a creature in my house, Ma’am, but an elderly gentlewoman and her maid-servant, that takes the second floor by the year. For my children being small, Ma’am, I contrive to let these two floors, and do as well as I can with the rest of the house; and to be sure, the gentleman that has these middle apartments, is as little trouble in a house as a gentleman can be, though he pays me three guineas a-week for them; but he’s at least half his time out of town.”

“ Are

“Are the apartments then let? (said Rosina;) perhaps he may return.”

“O, no danger of that, Ma’am; he’ll not be up till the sitting of parliament. Indeed, I am quite ashamed things are so disorderly. If you had but had the goodness, Ma’am, to let me know of your coming, a few days beforehand, you should have found matters in quite a different style.”

Thus did the good Mrs. Fleming continue to enjoy the pleasure of Rosina’s conversation, without putting her to the expence of contributing any share to the entertainment, until, not having yet finished Mrs. Fitzosborne’s commissions, she sent for a chair, and went out again to complete them.

K 2

CHAP,

C H A P. XVII.THE NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

Good gods ! 'tis like a rolling river,
Which murm'ring flows, and flows for ever !

GAY.

ROSINA having finished her business, returned at five o'clock, and found a chicken prepared for her by Mrs. Fleming. Austin also returned to her with the agreeable intelligence that he had settled every thing with the Captain, and got the greatest part of their luggage already on board. Yet still Rosina had terrible apprehensions of the machinations of old Nettleby, whose disposition she knew to be to the last degree inquisitive and prying, even in matters where his own interest was not immediately concerned.

However,

However, as the preparations for her departure were in so great forwardness, she hoped that she should be able to effect her escape before he could take any measures to prevent it.

Austin informed her, that, understanding they might be probably three or four days at sea, he had luckily bethought him, that, during that interval, they might possibly feel some inclination to eat, (a circumstance Rosina had never once adverted to,) and had therefore packed up a basket, with some wine and brandy, and such provisions as he thought might be useful to them. Rosina highly commended his prudence and diligence in the management of the business in which she had employed him; and was particularly pleased that she was to go by the way of Bristol, which was in every respect more agreeable and convenient than a journey by Holy-Head, where the publickness of the way might subject her to disagreeable encounters, and render it more easy to trace her in her flight."

These arrangements made, Rosina, quite overcome with weariness, threw herself on a couch in the drawing-room, and slept for near two hours. Mrs. Fleming prepared tea; and Rosina entreated

her to favour her with her company; for, tiresome and stupifying as was the everlasting din of that good woman's unmerciful volubility, Rosina, at that period, felt it preferable to a communion with the melancholy feelings of her own heart.

Whilst they were at tea they heard a loud rap at the door.

"Who can that be?" said Rosina, exceedingly alarmed.

"Somebody to Mrs. Langley, the gentlewoman that lives overhead, I dare say, (replied Mrs. Fleming;) for, though she's a little down in the world at present, or else, you know, Ma'am, she would not take up with a second floor, she's come of a good family, and is visited by a great number of people of condition; but you know, Ma'am, things of this kind often happen in the world."

"Very frequently," said Rosina.

"Her husband, Ma'am, had great relations, and enjoyed a capital place in the treasury. I dare say, Ma'am, Mr. Fitzosborne must have known him, for he made quite a flaming figure, and ——."

"Some

"Some one is on the stairs! (said Rosina;) I am afraid ——."

The door opened, and a stranger of a genteel and fashionable appearance entered the room, interrupted Mrs. Fleming's anecdotes, and threw Rosina into the greatest confusion. The gentleman bowed, and turned to withdraw, when Mrs. Fleming, who had started up on his entrance, ran to the door, and entreated him to come in.

"If I had expected you so soon in town, Sir, (said she,) I should not have taken this liberty; but the apartments being empty, and you being so obliging as to allow me to make use of them whilst you are away, I thought there was no harm ——."

"O, none in the world, Madam, (said the stranger;) it makes me very happy that they should be any convenience to you during my absence."

"Why, Sir, since you are so obliging as to say so always, and that this young lady came to town this morning about a little business that she has some reasons for desiring to keep private, I thought,

to be sure, I might as well endeavour to accommodate her. But, Sir, you have not drank tea. Do be so kind as to step over to the table and take a cup. You'll find it very refreshing after your journey; and it is this moment I have put fresh tea in the pot."

The gentleman, whose curiosity was exceedingly excited by the figure of Rosina and her little private business, accepted the invitation, and placed himself directly opposite to her at the table. The attention with which he examined her, whilst he sipped his tea, exceedingly increased her embarrassment. Conceiving, meantime, either from her evident timidity, or the company in which he found her, no very high idea of her rank, he addressed some little general conversation to her with an air of great familiarity, which she answered in the most laconic style.

"I think, Mrs. Fleming, (said he,) you told me this young lady came to town this morning? From her complexion, I should suppose she had been in the country, making depredations on the lilies and roses."

"All

"All pure nature, I warrant you, (returned Mrs. Fleming;) to be sure it would make one sick to see some of our ladies of quality how they do so plaster themselves! I cannot help laughing in my sleeve, when I hear Lady Catharine Singleton cried up for a beauty. But it is hard to tell who's handsome now-a-days."

"Not in the least," said the stranger, looking full at Rosina.

"Amongst our fine painted ladies, I mean, though," said Mrs. Fleming.

"Why, it is certainly not easy, (replied the gentleman,) to judge of a physiognomy that is concealed by a mask. Were our modern belles obliged to wash their faces, we should be able to ascertain their pretensions with more certainty."

"I protest that's very true, (said Mrs. Fleming.) I was sent for the other morning to my Lady Killgobbin, before her ladyship's face *was made*; and when I was shewed up to her dressing-room, upon my credit I could scarcely believe my own eyes. I give you my word and honour, the

skin of her ladyship's face looked for all the world like a piece of old shrivelled parchment that ——."

"Hold, hold, my good loquacious landlady, (said the gentleman;) for Heaven's sake, give us some quarter, and don't be so unmerciful as to bore us with descriptions of that withered harridan, that has been thrusting her plastered physiognomy into every public place these ten years past. One sees it every where, at plays, balls, concerts, public assemblies, and even private parties. Nay, the very day before the last sessions closed, when I was in the house, engaged in a very interesting debate with that little snarling fellow, G——, I chanced to cast my eyes upwards, and, lo! what should I behold but this same varnished vizard staring me full in the face from the opposite gallery; and this frightful apparition so effectually dissipated my ideas, that the devil a sentence could I muster to oppose to his arguments. I am convinced, that, were it possible for me to be pregnant, I should be delivered of just such another painted busto as her ladyship's.

"Well, to be sure, (cried Mrs. Fleming,) you have the most curious ideas. You pregnant, indeed!

deed! What a rate you do go on at when you get into one of your funny humours this way! But, as to my Lady Killgobbin, as I was saying ——."

"Hang her, (interrupted the stranger,) let us talk no more of her. It is a strange perversion of taste, when a very lovely object is before our eyes, (leaning both his arms on the table, and looking earnestly across it at Rosina,) to suffer the imagination to wander in search of a disagreeable one. Sir Harry Carleton and I have been projecting the heads of a bill which we mean to bring into the House next sessions, in order to oblige all those departed beauties, whose disagreeable and melancholy spectres have so long haunted our scenes of public festivity, to suffer themselves to be properly interred; for it is highly indecent to see those disagreeable bug-bears strolling about from one assembly to another, to depress the animation of the gay and youthful, and remind us of misfortunes which cannot be averted, when they ought to be reposing themselves quietly in their charnel-houses, if they had any conscience."

"O Lord! O Lord!" (cried Mrs. Fleming,) I never heard such horrible talk in my life. I wonder, begging your pardon, how you can speak

of such things with so little reserve. I never hear talk of ghosts and dead bodies, that it does not set me in a *tremble*. Things are come to a fine pass, to be sure, if folks are to be buried alive by act of parliament, because they are not young and handsome: it is the tyrannicallest contrivance that ever I heard of! We have a deal of fuss with our liberty, and our liberty; but, I am sure, the King of France himself, as wicked as he is with his iron-cages, and his lettres de *catch-it*, could do nothing worse than that. But I am persuaded the volunteers would never allow of such doings. And to say that people ought to be content to lie down quietly in burying-places among the dead bodies, instead of taking their pleasure, and enjoying themselves! I don't know who would submit to any such thing that could help themselves. I wonder how you will like it, when you come to be elderly yourself! But you must certainly be jesting all this time! Ma'am, it is so shocking, (turning to Rosina;) does'n't it put you in mind of the poor lady in the play, where her lover comes with a pickaxe, and digs her up out of the grave! it is so moving!"

"My dear literal landlady, (returned the gentleman,) it is strange that you can never be reconciled

concluded to my figurative mode of speech! I speak metaphorically, and adapt my phrase to my subject; for, amongst ladies of the ton, you, who are so much conversant with them, cannot but know —."

"Ladies of the town, Sir! I conversant with ladies of the town! A fine character you give me. But I believe there's no person of my — —."

"My dear Mrs. Fleming (interrupted the gentleman, laughing immoderately, whilst Rosina could not forbear smiling at this mistake,) you really misunderstand me."

"May be so, Sir, (said Mrs. Fleming, bridling,) may be this is another of your *metamorphocal* ways of speaking, as you call them."

"Indeed you entirely misconceive me, (resumed he;) the word I made use of is French, and utterly different in its true interpretation from that which you have bestowed on it. I was only going to remark to you, that you, who are so much conversant with women of fashion, must certainly know, that to be buried alive is nothing more than a *facon de parler*, a phrase synonymous with being secluded from polite society. Thus, when a young lady's

lady's parents or guardians restrain her from public amusements, her female acquaintances exclaim, "that the tyrannical old brutes bury her alive:" or, should her husband convey her to a retired country-seat, the inhuman monster is said to have inflicted on her the same species of interment; and to this my project is similar. I would have a large charnel-house, or rather *hospital for incurables*, erected in the most remote and unfrequented part of the kingdom, or on some solitary island pertaining to it; and thither would I send all those worn-out, hackneyed beauties, who are "*tarnished in the fated fight*," as the poet expresses it, and, by long obtrusion on the eye of the public, are become odious to it."

"I hope, then, (said Mrs. Fleming, who had condescended to be appeased with his explanation and apologies,) I hope you intend to send all your battered beaux to keep them company in their solitude."

"I intend it; and, in order to render their existence, or rather *non-existence*, as tolerable as possible to them, they shall be regularly supplied every week with cards, scandal, and rappée. Will you

you favour me with your opinion of my plan, Madam?" addressing Rosina,

"As I have not at present leisure to bestow on it the consideration it merits, Sir, (returned she,) I must defer giving my sentiments for the present. —Mrs. Fleming, (rising as she spoke,) I fear we have intruded too long on this gentleman. I have a letter to write. Will you give me leave to go down to one of your parlours?"

"I must take the liberty of opposing the motion, (said the gentleman,) and entreat, Madam, that you will do me the honour to occupy these apartments as long as may suit your convenience. You would certainly make me doubly happy, in allowing me to be your companion in them. But, as that is an indulgence I cannot reasonably expect, I can, without the slightest inconvenience, dispose of myself elsewhere."

Rosina thanked him coldly for his offer, which, however, she scarcely knew whether to construe as a compliment or an affront. It might, she knew, be well intended; but it wanted that air of modesty and respect, without which no offer of service from a stranger can possibly be acceptable.

The

The appearance of this person had, from his first entrance, thrown her into a very disagreeable dilemma, as she feared, lest his unexpected arrival might put it out of Mrs. Fleming's power to accommodate her with a bed.

"But, at any rate, Ma'am, what need you be in a hurry? (said Mrs. Fleming) Do, pray, sit down, and let me give Mr. Westley his tea. He has not half done yet. You'll see, every thing shall be settled to your liking by and by."

Rosina, hesitating and confused, resumed her seat.

Mr. Westley arose, walked about the room, humming a tune, and, going to the window, stood a few minutes looking out, and then remarking that the town was devilish empty, returned to the table, and taking a seat next to Rosina, threw his arm over the back of her chair.

CHAP. XVIII.

THE NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

A VIOLENT UPROAR.

JUST then, as Mr. Westley turned to address Rosina, the door suddenly opened, and in stalked Mr. Nettleby.

Rosina screamed; and Mr. Westley, astonished at her terror, threw his arms around her, and promised to protect her.

“ So, my fine young Madam, (said the old gentleman,) I have ferreted you out at last. This is a fine exploit you have atchieved, and a pretty situation I find you in. From the moment I was apprized of your being in town to-day, I knew
you

your wicked intentions as well as if I had possessed the power of divination. But I am come time enough, however, to prevent the execution of your design. You shall come home with me immediately to my own house. I will sit up myself all night to watch you; and to-morrow morning, by peep of day, I will set out with you for Belle-Vue; for I am determined never to let you from under my own eye, until I deliver you up safe and sound to the protection of the friends from whom you have made your escape."

Mrs. Fleming and Mr. Westley looked at each other in great astonishment, whilst the consternation of Rosina, who was now convinced that all her plans were discovered, entirely sealed her lips.

"And as to you, abominable wretch! (continued Nettleby, turning fiercely to Mr. Westley,) what shall I say to you!"

"Say to me, Sir!"

"Aye, say to you, Sir! Shall I not say that you are a villain, a deceiver, and a liar, like that devil of whom you are undoubtedly one of the choicest instruments!"

"Good

“ Good again, Sir : and pray what else have you to say to me ? ”

“ What else, Sir ! More, perhaps, than you’ll be pleased to hear, when you are brought before a court of justice, to answer for your misdemeanours.”

“ And, pray, Sir, for which of my misdemeanours am I to be arraigned before the tribunal of justice ? ”

“ For the iniquitous seduction of this unfortunate child here present, Sir.”

“ O Lord ! O Lord ! (exclaimed Mrs. Fleming,) did any one ever hear the like of this since the world was a world ! I protest it is downright *scandalous magnatum* ! The gentleman, that has been married these five years, and has a wife and three children of his own ! ”

“ A married man, too ! (cried Nettleby.) O, wicked wretch ! abominable and licentious !— Could’st thou not run headlong to the devil by thyself, without drawing this poor, ignorant, silly, unfor-

unfortunate wretch of a girl into the everlasting pit along with thee?"

"The man's mad," said Mr. Westley.

"As a march hare," rejoined Mrs. Fleming.

Rosina, who now perceived that her manœuvres were still undiscovered, began to resume some degree of composure. Her indignation at Nettleby's atrocious behaviour supplied her with spirit.

"I wish, Sir, (said she, addressing him with a countenance expressive of mingled vexation and resentment) from my soul I wish, that you could be conscious of the very ridiculous light in which you place yourself by your absurd and impertinent conduct! What crime have I committed, for which I am to be imprisoned in your house, and brought to-morrow under a guard to my friends? an imprisonment I will not submit to, and a journey which, under your convoy at least, I am determined not to make. But, even allowing my actions to be imprudent, what authority have you to control or restrain them? Why do you thus busy yourself in my affairs? If Mrs. Fitzosborne
thinks

thinks me adequate to the regulation of my own conduct, is it your business to watch and inspect it?"

"Mrs. Fitzosborne, indeed! Would you have the confidence to persuade me that she was privy to this fine elopement of your's! Aye, you think yourself mighty cunning; but you will find it no easy matter to make me believe that fine story, as great a politician as you think yourself."

"I made no elopement, (said Rosina;) I came to town in compliance with Mrs. Fitzosborne's wishes; in her carriage I came, and attended by her servants."

"That she did, (said Mrs. Fleming;) I can be upon my oath of it. And by the same token, I called the girl down stairs, to take the portmanteaues from the footman; and just as her foot was on the last step of the stairs, the clock struck ten, and says I to the girl ——."

"Ha, Xantippe!" (exclaimed the old gentleman, whose rage had hitherto prevented him from recognizing Mrs. Fleming,) art thou here, too!" Please Heaven, I shall soon enjoy the satisfaction
of

of beholding thee disciplined at a cart's tail, like other dames of thy infamous profession."

"O dear, O dear! (cried Mrs. Fleming,) this is of a piece with all the rest! I leave it to the public, if there is any thing infamous in the profession of a mantua-maker, when people mind their business, and pay their debts honestly. It's a pretty thing, if folks are to be abused in this manner, and treated like the vilest of creatures, for nothing at all but only because it is the will of Providence that they should earn their own bread!"

"Sir, (said Mr. Westley,) I think you have now very sufficiently exercised your talents for abuse and scurrility. Your age and insignificance have hitherto protected you: but I must now insist on your taking yourself away, as I shall else be necessitated to shew you a short passage into the street, by the way of the window."

"My insignificance! (repeated Nettleby:) and pray who are you, Sir, that have the insolence to prate to me in this strain? Some swindling black-guard of a hair-dresser, I suppose; for in this age of tinsel and outside, no one is to be estimated by his external appearance. But I would advise you
to

to keep your hectoring Bobadille airs for those who are to be intimidated by a flash in the pan. I know what I am about: I have not come without my credentials. I have the law on my side, and wo'n't stir a step farther than it authorizes me to do. I have a justice of peace's warrant in my pocket, and have the sheriff waiting at the street-door in my carriage, to assist me in the execution of it."

"Good Heaven, (said Rosina, to the last degree shocked at being thus exposed and tormented,) what is to become of me!"

"What is to become of you, indeed! A better fate awaits you than you deserve; thanks be to my great charity, in preventing your destruction. So you had better come along with me, without exposing yourself any farther."

He approached Rosina as he spoke, who fell backwards in her chair almost in a swoon.

"Sir, (said Mr. Westley, interposing,) this young lady shall not be removed in this manner. She is in my apartments; and I think myself bound by the laws of hospitality to protect her."

"Do

“Do you so, Sir Knight-errant? Well, then all I have to do, is to send down to William-street for a few of the officers of the police.”

“O Lord, O Lord! (exclaimed Mrs. Fleming, wringing her hands and weeping aloud,) was there ever any thing so unfortunate! I would not for every farthing I am worth in the world it had happened! To have the sheriff and police men brought here to my house, as if I kept disorderly company! And I dare say there will be a long history of it in the newspaper to-morrow morning! — See, Ma’am, (turning to Rosina,) what a scrape I have got into by my civility to you. Since matters are come to this pass, it will be a great deal the best of your play to go away quietly with the old gentleman, who, I dare say, is a very discreet person, and has a great kindness for you, and means you no harm in the world ——.”

“Then you refuse to let me stay in your house, Mrs. Fleming,” said Rosina, bursting into tears.

“O, not at all, Ma’am, (said Mrs. Fleming,) it would give me all the pleasure in life, and I should

should think it a very great honour to have you in my house; but you see how it is. I shall be ruined and undone for ever, if there's any uproar made in my house. I never shall be able to hold up my head after it, or look a person of quality in the face as long as I live."

"I will send myself for the sheriff, (said Mr. Westley.) The young lady shall not be taken away by this old madman."

"Aye, do so, (said Nettleby,) and you have not far to send; for, as I have already told you, you will find him waiting in my carriage at the door."

Mr. Westley then sent a message to the sheriff, who immediately afterwards made his appearance, and saluted Mr. Westley, with whom he happened to be acquainted, with great respect.

"Mr. Harwood, (said Mr. Westley, addressing the sheriff,) you find me engaged here in a very extraordinary business ——."

"Not at all extraordinary in this age of universal depravity, (interrupted Nettleby.) But go

on, and let us hear what defence you can make for yourself."

Mr. Westley looked angrily at Nettleby; but, turning from him with an air of contempt, which implied an opinion that his impertinence was unworthy an answer, resumed his address to the sheriff.

"Unexpected business obliged me to hurry to town, without allowing me leisure to apprize my landlady, Mrs. Fleming, with my intention——."

"Sir, your humble servant, (said Mrs. Fleming, wiping her eyes, and courtying very low to the sheriff.) I hope your lady and the young misses are all well. I have the honour of making for them ——."

"On my arrival here this evening, I found Mrs. Fleming and this young lady, whom I have never seen until within this hour ——"

"So, now the budget of lies begins to open!" cried Nettleby.

"O——"

"O, that I am ready to take an affidavit of," said Mrs. Fleming.

"Mrs. Fleming, on my arrival, took the trouble of making tea for me," pursued Mr. Westley.

"O, dear Sir, (interrupted the courteous Mrs. Fleming,) I am sure it was no trouble in life, but a very great pleasure to me."

"O, thou everlasting prater! (exclaimed Nettleby,) hast thou made a vow never to suffer that tormenting tongue of thine to rest one moment in silence, or allow the least interval of repose to the ears of thy neighbours? Let the man proceed in his evidence, thou monster of loquacity. One would imagine these frequent interruptions were artificially contrived for the purpose of affording him time to recollect his confused ideas, and invent new falsehoods."

"Indeed, (said Mr. Westley,) short and simple as my tale is, I find it very difficult to get to the conclusion of it. Suffice it then to say, that whilst I was at tea with the ladies, this person, who is totally unknown to me, burst into the room, and, without the slightest provocation, has insulted and

abused me in the most opprobrious manner, accusing me of having seduced this young lady from her friends, and threatening me with all the vengeance of the law."

"There must certainly be some great mistake in this matter, Counsellor, (said the sheriff, addressing Nettleby.) I have the honour of knowing this gentleman very well. He is in parliament, and a person of consequence and fortune."

"Well, and what then? Is he to be permitted, on account of his consequence and fortune, to trample with impunity on every right of society? And, as to his being in parliament, though it may entitle him to the privilege of cheating honest tradespeople of their money, it can certainly confer on him no right to rob us of our wives and daughters."

"But you have heard the gentleman say that he never saw the lady until within this hour," replied the sheriff.

"Yes,—and I have heard many others, who pretended to be gentlemen, aver falsehoods full as inconsistent and infamous."

"Sir,

“ Sir, (said Mr. Westley,) as I perceive you must certainly labour under some very great misapprehension, and without doubt mistake me for some other person, I am willing to compromise the affair. Withdraw quietly, and I will take no farther notice of the abuse you have so prodigally lavished on me, as I shall consider it as intended for another, and that I only received it as his proxy.”

“ You will be satisfied to compromise the matter! (replied Nettleby with an ironical sneer.) Will you so, sweet Sir? I believe you will, indeed. But, as to any reproofs I may have given you, I assure you they were intended for yourself, and no other person whatever. And much good may do you with them. You deserve them all, if they had been ten times as much, and so, you are heartily welcome to them.”

“ Is this treatment to be endured! (cried Mr. Westley.) I don't know what prevents me from breaking the old fellow's bones! The man is certainly insane!”

“ Sir, (said Rosina, raising her head, and addressing the sheriff,) I solemnly protest to you I

made no elopement from my friends. I left the country by the desire of Mrs. Fitzosborne, the lady with whom I have resided since my infancy. Her carriage and servants brought me to this house, where I have accidentally met this gentleman for the first time of my life: and I can attribute the unaccountable conduct of Mr. Nettleby to nothing but madness."

"Aye, indeed, it is all true enough. I'll be sworn to every word the young lady says, (cried Mrs. Fleming.) And for that matter, there's one of the domestics, at this moment, waiting for her orders below in my kitchen; and I'll go down, and fetch him up to you, Sir, that you may take his depositions about the affair, and see that we have told you nothing but the truth."

Rosina would willingly have prevented old Austin from being exhibited on the scene at this crisis; but the officious Mrs. Fleming allowed her no time to hinder it. She returned to the room in a few minutes, followed by Austin, whose appearance threw Nettleby into a new paroxysm of rage.

"Do

“ Do you not perceive, (cried he to the sheriff,) that they are all of one story? All accomplices in the same guilt! And as for you, villainous wretch, turning to Austin, I could find in my heart to pluck off that white beard of your’s, if it was but long enough.”

“ Lord, Sir, (said Austin,) I am sure I never wished to give you no sort of offence! And I will hold myself very much obligated to your honour, if you will but let me know what it is that makes you to owe me such a spite.”

“ Counsellor, (said the sheriff,) this is really a very odd kind of a business, and I can proceed in it no farther. Your surmises, which appear to me wholly unreasonable and ill grounded, can give me no legal authority to take away this young lady, who has been guilty of no imprudence that I can see, and to whom it is evident no violence is intended. Besides, Sir, you don’t seem to consider that you lay yourself open to a prosecution for defamation: and if this gentleman, whom I know to be a person of honour and character, should institute a suit against you, the consequences might be very serious.”

This last argument seemed to have some weight with the old gentleman.

“ Well, Sir, (said he, after a pause of a few minutes,) I allow it is possible that I may have been in an error in respect to you. Facts may possibly be as you have stated them: but, at all events, as I have very cogent reason to suspect this foolish girl, and this wicked old man here, of harbouring some sinister design), though I confess I cannot clearly make out of what nature it is,) you will allow, that, being an intimate of the family, who, through charitable motives, have reared and educated this child, she being originally a poor destitute orphan,—I say you will allow, that there can be no impropriety in my taking her home with me, to spend the night at my house. So, child, you had better get on your capuchin, and come along with me without more loss of time. I can accommodate you conveniently enough; for I will have a press-bed removed into the closet inside my own chamber, where you may sleep in all imaginable quietness and comfort.”

“ Sir, (said Rosina, whose indignation was not greatly softened by this harangue, by that part of it especially which related to her footing in Mr. Fitzosborne’s

Fitzosborne's family,) I have already told you, that I will not enter the doors of your house, and nothing shall force me to alter my determination."

"As headstrong as ever! (cried Nettleby.) A pretty complication,—the folly of the ass, with the obstinacy of the mule!"

"But consider, Sir, (said Mr. Westley,) as I suppose you are an unmarried gentleman, there might be some indecorum in the young lady's going home with you, to spend the night in the little closet inside your bed-chamber. You know the world is very censorious ———."

"Not quite so great an indecorum, I imagine, Sir, (replied Nettleby sharply,) as in continuing all night in your lodgings, although you are a married man."

"Miss Mortimer continue all night in Mr. Westley's lodgings! (exclaimed Mrs. Fleming.) Did any one ever hear the like! Mr. Westley does not lodge in all the rooms in my house, it is to be supposed. No, indeed, the young lady shall sleep in a snug little chamber inside my own room,

where she will be as safe as if she was at my Lord Mayor's."

"I think, Sir, (said the sheriff,) as the young lady does not seem inclined to go with you, there can be no impropriety in trusting her to the care of Mrs. Fleming, who has the character of being a very discreet and sober person."

"Sir, I am very much obliged to you for your good word, (said Mrs. Fleming, courtlying very low to the sheriff,) you see that now, (turning to Nettleby:) but, I thank God, no one can say any other of me."

"Mr. Nettleby, after many more remonstrances and expostulations, finding it impossible to prevail on Rosina to accompany him, and perceiving that it was utterly out of his power to force her into compliance with his wishes, was at length necessitated to go without her; though he consented to this measure with a very ill grace, and gave Mrs. Fleming many strict injunctions to have her forthcoming in the morning, when, he said, she might reckon on a very early visit from him."

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

THE NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

MACHINATIONS OF A LAWYER.

MR. Nettleby, after his conversation with Mrs. Fleming and Austin in the morning, entertaining not the least doubt that Rosina had eloped from Belle-vue, retired into a coffee-house, as has already been related, to contrive some plot to counterwork her machinations ; for the fortune, of which he foresaw she would one day be put in possession, ran strangely in his head ; and, though he had entirely relinquished every idea of receiving a title to it himself, yet he could not prevail on himself

to renounce the flattering hope of being (as he had expressed himself on a former occasion) in some measure related to it. But he had a more prevalent motive to induce him to interest himself in this business ; and this was the fear of losing the thousand pounds, to which, by his stipulation with Mr. Hume, he was to become entitled on the recovery of the suit, in case of that gentleman's marriage with Rosina ; and he would have been far from discountenancing her union with his nephew, on account of the imprudence of which he supposed her to be guilty. Women, he imagined, were all alike, and fancied that a regular and sober demeanour after marriage originated rather in a proper exertion of authority on the part of the husband, than in any steady principles of innate goodness in the heart of the wife.

He immediately determined to set one of his emissaries to watch Rosina's motions. If, as he was strongly inclined to believe, she had come to town in the intention of meeting and eloping with some favoured lover, Mrs. Fleming's house, he was convinced, would be the place of rendezvous, and he therefore stationed his agent directly opposite her house, with directions to watch and dodge Rosina (whose person and dress he found it
easy

easy to describe to him, as she wore a brown riding-dress and white beaver hat) wherever she went.

This person had punctually obeyed his orders, and followed Rosina's chair the second time she had gone out to the milliner's, mercer's, jeweller's, &c. and afterwards attended her home, and resumed his station opposite the house, narrowly observing every person who entered it, whilst the old gentleman walked through the street, from time to time, to receive his informations, but heard nothing to justify his suspicions, except the return of Rosina to Mrs. Fleming's house, and the business which it was evident was transacting between her and Austin. About eight o'clock in the evening, however, as he stood in deep conversation with his spy, at the corner of a little lane, almost opposite to the house, a carriage drove up to the door, on which he had still kept his eye fixed, of which the horses appeared to be very hard driven. On seeing a gentleman dart out of it, and fly into the house without asking any questions, entertaining no doubt that this was the unknown lover of Rosina, who has so long excited his suspicions, and, supposing that the carriage at the door was destined to carry her he knew not whither,

whither, he instantly determined on his measures; and, leaving his spy to watch their operations in his absence, hurried off to the next justice to procure a warrant, and, accidentally meeting the sheriff, had persuaded him to accompany him. — For even, though no advantage should accrue either to his nephew or himself, from the very active part he took in this business, he was encouraged to proceed in it by the idea that he should gain a certain advantage, in laying Mr. Fitzosborne under an eternal obligation to him, by preventing a young lady, for whose interest he doubted not he had the truest paternal concern, from disposing of herself in a clandestine and unworthy manner. — But, perhaps, after all, one of the strongest motives of his intervention in this affair was the gratification of a busy and active principle in his own mind, which had frequently led him to intermeddle in matters which did not concern him, and, notwithstanding his boasted sagacity and prudence, had sometimes involved him in disagreeable consequences. Such were Mr. Nettleby's inducements for exciting a disturbance productive of infinite distress, anxiety, and mortification, to Rosina.

After Mr. Nettleby and the sheriff were withdrawn, Mrs. Fleming and Mr. Westley endeavoured

voured all in their power to console Rosina, and calm the agitation of spirits into which she was thrown by this vexatious incident.

“It is a sin and a shame (exclaimed Mrs. Fleming) to let such an old tyger run loose about the town, tormenting honest people after such a manner! For my part, I shall not be the better of it for this month; I feel as if I was every bit of me turned upside down. You that talk of making acts of parliament, Mr. Westley, I wish to the Lord you would make one to shut that termagant old devil up in a mad-house. I am sure it is the fittest place for him.”

“And yet, Mrs. Fleming, (said Rosina,) you just represented him as a very discreet person, and advised me to go home to his house with him.”

“O Lord! ma’am, (cried Mrs. Fleming,) I cannot think I could be guilty of saying any such thing; only to be sure, if you say it it must be so. But you must be sensible, ma’am, that, when people are put quite beside themselves, and terrified out of their own senses, they are not answerable for any thing they say or do: and I am sure, ma’am,
you

you will allow that such treatment was enough to set any one as mad as buck or bear."

Mr. Westley, who really compassionated Rosina exceedingly, now entirely divested himself of those airs of gallantry, which, in the preceding part of the evening had been so offensive to her, and advised her in a very serious and friendly manner to return to her friends as soon as possible, and hinted that this unlucky adventure might give rise to disagreeable reports.

Rosina thanked him for his counsel, and said she was determined to leave town very early the next morning.

"And then, I suppose, we shall have the devil to pay with old Furibon, (cried Mrs. Fleming,) for he'll be coming here, hunting after you, as sure as I stand in this spot alive, and, when he finds you are not forth coming, he'll torment and worry the life out of me ten times worse than ever. But I know what I'll do; — there is my neighbour over the way, Mr. Cassidy, the ho-fier, a very great volunteer, and he'll come to me at a minute's warning: how unlucky it was that I never thought of sending for him! I warrant you he's the man to settle him. He'd have packed him
away

away in a minute, with a flea in his ear ! — But the fright put every thing out of my head.”

Rosina, after thanking Mr. Westley for his politeness and humanity, and apologizing to him for the trouble she had occasioned him, and the ill treatment he had received on her account, bad him good night, and retired with Mrs. Fleming.

C H A P. XX.

THE NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

— No place but harbours danger ;
In every region virtue finds a foe.

MILTON.

HAD Rosina possessed any of that prudence which results from knowledge of the world, her finding herself involved in so disagreeable an adventure, even on the first day of her quitting the maternal

maternal wing, and erring from the directions of her protectress, might have forwarned her of the evils to which she exposed herself, by this voluntary renunciation of a guardianship so absolutely necessary to her defenceless sex and early period of life. But, possessed of money adequate to any probable emergency, and accompanied by a domestic of Austin's tried fidelity and prudence, she could foresee no danger in that solitude which it was her intention to explore, and she was too sanguine to dread those remoter consequences to which her prescience did not extend. Her residence beneath the roof of Mr. Fitzosborne was become hateful to her, but, in thus clandestinely quitting it, she listened rather to the suggestions of pride and resentment than to the unbiassed dictates of deliberate reflection, which would have pointed out to her, had she listened to them, the folly of flying from a lesser evil by precipitating herself into a greater.

The apprehension of the censure of the world, too, would have deterred many young women from so dangerous an enterprize; but, to this, notwithstanding the hint thrown out by Mr. Westley, Rosina never once adverted; for of the world she was almost totally ignorant, and it ne-

ver

ver once occurred to her, that unprovoked malevolence could find any gratification in endeavouring to affix the stigma of guilt to an action consistent with innocence, and sanctioned, as she flattered herself, by gratitude and by honour. Certain of never having injured, and conscious of having frequently served and constantly wished to oblige her fellow-creatures, she thought not that amongst the race of intelligent beings there could be found a creature base enough to wish to return with unmerited injury the philanthropy that glowed in her own pure and innocent heart ; for, from that pure and innocent heart she borrowed the vain and fallible criterion by which she estimated the sentiments and designs of others.

She knew, it is true, that Mr. Fitzosborne was her enemy ; but, as his enmity had originated in the interference of their interests, she imagined that, when the cause was removed, the effect would cease to operate, and that his hatred, satisfied with the sacrifice she had made to it, would be converted into pity.

Of scandal and detraction, though she had often heard and read, she had seen but little ; for she had passed a very small portion of her time out
of

of the presence of Mrs. Fitzosborne, and, from the avowed contempt and detestation in which these reigning and favourite vices were held by that lady, they seldom dared to exhibit themselves in her presence; though, had Rosina possessed much penetration, she might often, perhaps, have perceived the hydra-headed monsters venturing to peep out from beneath the veil of dissimulation, and frequently endeavouring to conceal their natural deformities under the superficial appearances of charity, candour, and friendship.

But, at the age of eighteen, it was more natural that Rosina should be occupied by the innocent and amiable gratification of pleasing others, and amusing herself, than in developing the fraudulent intricacies of hypocrisy, and making those acute observations on life and manners, which are generally the result of maturer reflexion, and often the offspring of experienced futility and disappointed hope. Besides, as she had no lover to whose influence her flight could be attributed, she thought her reputation entirely secure. At all events, she imagined she had gone too far to recede: every obstacle to her design was now removed, and nothing remained for her but to embark, on the morrow, for that port where she fondly

fondly flattered herself she should recover the tranquillity she had lost.

Still, however, as the hour of her departure approached, dismay, anxieties, and forebodings, seized her heart, and nothing but the idea of returning to the house, and depending on the bounty of the man she detested, could have inspired her with fortitude to combat those feelings of dismay and terror.

Rosina retired early to her apartment, where Mrs. Fleming the more willingly left her at peace, that she might be at liberty to go spread the adventure of the evening around the neighbourhood, and consult with her friend, the volunteer, on the means best calculated to defend her from the incursions of the old barbarian, of whose expected attack on the succeeding morning she was extremely apprehensive.

Rosina, mean time, when her spirits had subsided into some degree of tranquillity, wrote the following letter to her friend.

ROSINA

ROSINA TO MRS. FITZOSBORNE.

ADOPTED in infancy, cherished with more than maternal solicitude from the first period that memory can look back to, shielded from every inconvenience, gratified with a fond partiality, beloved with a fervor unprecedented, accomplished in every elegant attainment that refines the understanding and softens the manners, instructed yet more by bright example than by precept, in every noble virtue that refines humanity, every lovely grace that communicates a charm to social life,—shall Rosina offer no tribute but that of ineffectual gratitude on the shrine of such exalted worth, such pre-eminent generosity! Shall she not catch a flame of emulation from the altar of that virtue she adores! shall she not endeavour to evince herself not unworthy a tenderness so lavishly bestowed, a benevolence so invariably adhered to!

Friend of my youth, protectress of my infancy! every endearing recollection, every unmerited obligation, as they arise in long retrospect to my memory, confirms me in my new resolution, and strengthens the purpose of my wavering soul.

How my heart bleeds at the idea of the anguish which the lines I am now tracing must inflict on your's ! I have left your house to return to it no more !

You have now the solution of that weak irresolution which but last night astonished and perplexed you. Ah ! was it wonderful if I shuddered at renouncing the sanctuary of my youth, at deserting the tender and faithful guardian of my infancy ! Merciful heaven ! how my heart was torn by that last unconscious embrace !—Yet I must go, an inevitable necessity seems to compel me.

Could I suffer you to be seduced from your duty, by a tenderness too fervent and unrestrained ! What other medium was left for me to adopt, between exposing myself to hourly insult and disgrace, or repaying obligation with injury, and forcing asunder the bonds that duty holds most sacred ?

Sooner, were it possible, sooner would I descend to the gloomy center of the earth, and live secluded from the cheerful light of heaven, than suffer the painful reflection of having involved you
in

in error; of having excited, in your blameless bosom, one pang of penitential sorrow, one humiliating retrospection of a deviation from rectitude !

Yet, perhaps, whilst I fondly fancy I obey the impulses of gratitude and honour, I yield to the proud suggestions of unsubdued resentment; perhaps I should have taught my spirit to bear, with uncomplaining resignation, the disgraces incident to poverty, repressed the indignant emotions of my soul, and meekly bent my neck beneath the burden of dependence !

Yet, why not take refuge in the peaceful bosom of that obscurity, to which, indigent and orphan as I am, my fate seems to have decreed me ? Have you not yourself taught me, that it is virtue to oppose oppression ? and is it a blameable presumption, if I am conscious that, whilst your tenderness weeps over the resolution I have adopted, it will stand acquitted to your justice ?

You will soon receive a strange account of me from Mr. Netleby, but I hope this letter will reach you before his intelligence. By an unlucky accident, he discovered me at the house of Mrs. Fleming,

Fleming, in Grafton-street, from whence I now write. He has treated me in a most outrageous manner, and occasioned me infinite mortification and distress. I know too, that he will endeavour to misrepresent my conduct, and impute my flight to motives the most atrocious; but the absurdity of his story will defeat its own purpose, and render vindication unnecessary.

But the hour I hope will come, when I may leave the retreat to which I am now on the point of retiring. The marriage of your son, or the attachment of his affections to some worthier or happier woman, will break the spell that detains me from your arms; and Mr. Fitzosborne will no longer repine at the place I hold in your affections, when convinced that the undisturbed possession of that blessing is the first and dearest object of my wishes, the supreme ambition of my heart.

The more you reflect on my departure, the more you will become conscious of the necessity that enforced it. Remember, too, that this temporary exile from your presence will render me more worthy to return to it. The presence of

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a beloved

a beloved and amiable son will console you for my absence. Why was I not permitted to participate in the joy of an event which we have so often together fondly anticipated !

But I will still participate in that joy. Yes, my friend, though " Alps arise, and oceans roll between us," the illusions of sympathy shall enliven the languor of absence. Fancy, like some propitious sorceress, shall supply me with a magic mirror, where, in spite of the intervention of a tedious distance, I shall behold the objects of my tenderness delineated ; I shall witness in idea their occupations, their amusements, their conversations, the sweet and holy interchange of filial gratitude and maternal love ; and often shall I hear them speak of their Rosina, and offer up to heaven their fervent and mingled vows for the preservation of their fugitive. Oh ! if mine might be accepted ; oh ! if the prayers of the orphan might arise before the throne of the Almighty, my friend, my protectress, your elevated virtue should draw down from Heaven some peculiar reward, and that ineffable blessedness, which the blessed only can conceive, should be your portion !

R O S I N A.

P. S.

P. S. I have left the things you desired me to buy for you in Mrs. Fleming's care. — You will find by the bills, that I have still money enough left for the execution of a plan that requires but little. Had I thought otherwise, I should, without scruple, have appropriated to my use the whole of the sum I received on your account; but I have near a hundred and eighty pounds remaining; and, with the economy I mean to practise, this money will be amply sufficient to any want that can arise in the obscure situation to which it is my intention to retire. I entreat, then, that you will be under no anxiety on this subject: be assured, that, on any emergency, either of this nature or any other, you shall immediately hear from

Your

ROSINA.

C H A P. XXI.

THE NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

AFTER Rosina had written this letter, she threw herself on the bed in her cloaths, her bosom tormented with fear, and agitated with solicitude. She had desired Austin to bring her a carriage as early as he could get one, and, wretchedly apprehensive of some farther interruption from Nettleby, after having passed a miserable night, she arose at the dawn of the morning, and stood watching for the carriage at her window, her heart palpitating at every sound.

But Austin had too much forethought and vigilance to let her continue long in this distressing suspense ;

suspense; he had engaged a carriage the preceding night, and brought it to the door before the clock struck six.

As soon as informed of his arrival, she went into the adjoining chamber, where Mrs. Fleming slept, and found the good woman just risen to attend her. Rosina thanked her for the civilities she had received from her, and, as she bad her adieu, slipped six guineas into her hand, and flew down stairs to avoid her acknowledgments. She was in the carriage in an instant, and, spite of Austin's reluctance, obliged him to take a seat in it. This precaution saved her from a new persecution, for they had not proceeded a hundred yards, when they met the indefatigable Nettleby in a travelling chaise of his own, which he had brought to convey Rosina home to Belle-vue. — However, as the blinds of the carriage were up, he luckily passed her by without observation. — As soon as his carriage was sufficiently distant, Austin desired the coachman to drive on. In his way he stopped to put Rosina's letter into the post-office, and in little more than half an hour they arrived at the end of the South wall, from whence Austin could easily distinguish his friend's vessel lying a anchor in the bay.

As they had come earlier than the appointed time, they waited at least half an hour before the arrival of the boat which was to convey them to the ship. This was a trying interval to the spirits of Rosina; all her desires and wishes had ardently impelled her onwards, whilst she was apprehensive of being prevented by Nettleby. But now convinced that there was no danger of his tracing the route she had taken, every piercing regret revived in her bosom; her heart fainted at the sight of the boat, when it approached to carry her on board; she leaned trembling on Austin's arm as she alighted from the carriage; she cast her eyes backwards, and sighed very deeply.

"Lord, miss! (said Austin,) I am afraid your heart misgives you."

"It does indeed, Austin!" said Rosina.

"Why, then, if that be the case, miss, we had better go our ways home again, in the name of God! for it is a bad thing to slight those inward warnings and misgivings, for many and many a body has been saved by them; and do not you remember, miss, that Robinson Crusoe would have suffered shipwreck one time, after he left his island,
only

only for some yearnings that he had within himself? O Lord! see what a wave there is coming yonder! Does not the sea begin to look very rough? I protest I think I am beginning to feel some qualms and misgivings myself."

"Austin, (said Rosina,) I fear not the winds nor the waves: I dare say our voyage will be prosperous."

"Oh! (said Austin,) if it is a thing that you are only a little confarn'd like, at leaving a place that you have lived in so many years, that is only a natural cause, and there is nothing at all in it; but, after all, you know it is to your own native country you are going back again to, and that ought to comfort you. Besides, it would be a thing impossible to come at our luggage, now that they have it all under hatches; and, as for the good fat fowl and wine, and brandy, and things that I have packed up in the hamper, to the tune of thirty shillings worth, we might throw our cap at them, as the saying goes, for the devil a taste of them would the sailors let out of their clutches. So, that being the case, miss, and that you have no inward misgivings, I think we had

best trust our lives to the mercy of God, whose wise providence can dispose of all things."

Rosina suffered Austin to lead her to the boat, which soon conveyed them to the ship, which only awaited their arrival to weigh anchor and set sail. When taken on board, she once more cast her eyes backwards on the country she voluntarily abandoned; a luxuriant Eden seemed to arise to her view; she blessed, with a thousand good wishes, the hospitable asylum of her deserted infancy, where she had been so tenderly beloved, and so affectionately nurtured. It recalled ideas too affecting, sensations too poignant. — To conceal the emotions of her swelling heart, she hurried down to the cabin, and threw herself into bed; where, after a short interval, the sense of keen regret was steeped in the stupefaction of violent sickness. On the third day they reached Bristol.

When the mind is not corroded by any very deep and heavy affliction, its regrets, though tender, will be transient; each charm of variety will lessen their force, and every passing moment will bear them away on its wings. The beautiful scenery that expanded itself to Rosina's view, as
the

the ship sailed up the Severn, chaced for an interval every sentiment but that of pleasure from her heart; and she cast her eyes around her in search of the cottage which romantic fancy had pictured to her as the residence of rural felicity and the sacred refuge of peace; but a moment's reflexion convinced her that she must seek it in a more unfrequented region; for, however the beauty of the country might allure her wishes, she knew it would be necessary to remove, as soon as possible, from a place where the great resort of strangers, and particularly of Irish, might subject her to perpetual recognition.

The evening of her arrival in Bristol, Rosina begged the Captain, who was a very decent man, and had behaved to her with great attention during the voyage, would recommend her to some respectable private lodging, where she might remain for a few days, until she was ready to pursue her journey.

The captain now informed her that he had a sister, who kept a lodging-house, where he believed she could be very conveniently accommodated. A coach was sent for to carry Rosina and her

M 5

baggage;

baggage; and a little lad, the captain's son, went with her, by way of pilot, to steer her to the appointed place. Rosina was very civilly received by the good woman of the house, and found very comfortable accommodation for herself and Austin.

The day following Rosina informed her landlady, that, as her circumstances were rather narrow, it was her intention to retire to some remote part of Wales, where she might find a little cottage, with a few acres of land, in an agreeable situation.

The good woman informed her, that, in respect to the country, she knew not much of the matter, having never been more than twenty miles distant from Bristol in her life; but added, that she had a widow sister, who kept a respectable inn in ——— shire, about sixty miles distant, near a little village called Pennygwylty, which, she had heard folks say, was the most beautifullest and the most romanticallest place in all Wales; and that, if Rosina chose to try for a cottage in that neighbourhood, she would write a letter to her sister, who, she said, she

was

was sure would, on her recommendation, do all in her power to assist her.

Rosina thanked her for this obliging offer, which she accepted with great pleasure, and the following day, after having taken leave of her kind hostess, and gratified her very liberally, she set out, in a post-chaise, with her luggage and Austin, whom she could with great difficulty prevent from taking his station behind the carriage, and prevail on to accept a place inside it.

As the carriage was heavily laden, and the country hilly, they made no rapid progress in their journey. They went no farther than forty miles that day, and the next morning arrived pretty early at the place of her destination.

CHAP. XXII.**THE NARRATIVE CONTINUED.**

WHEN Rosina presented the letter of her Bristol landlady to her sister, Mrs. Jenkins, whose residence she found no difficulty in discovering, the good woman rendered her every service with redoubled alacrity, and asked her a thousand questions, half Welsh, half English, relative to her sister and her family, which Rosina answered with a sweetness and affability which so highly prepossessed her hostess in her favour, that she would have been very well pleased to have lodged her for nothing. Rosina consulted her in respect to her intention of settling in her neighbourhood,—intelligence with which she appeared

to be greatly delighted, and promised to use her utmost diligence in making the necessary enquiries.

"I do not recollect (said she, tapping her head) of ever a *tee back*, that is, little house, as one should say in English, that is to be let in this neighbourhood; but it is not unlikely that there may be one soon, for there is Gryffith ap Price, as I am told, very bad at the point of death, and, if he comes to die, his house will be set or sold to be sure; for he is as poor as a church-mouse, and the minute the breath is out of his body, the creditors will seize on every thing."

Rosina, finding her present residence exceedingly quiet and retired, as well as most charmingly situated, determined to dismiss her carriage, and fix herself here for a few days, in order to allow herself leisure to seek for some more eligible abode. Here she first acquainted Austin with a design she had formed of passing for his daughter, an honour that quite confounded and astonished him.

"But now, my dear Miss Rosina, (said he,) do you think that story will hang well together ?

or

or that people would be such fools for to believe that a poor working man like me could have such a fine young lady as you for a daughter? Sure folks need only hear you speak one word, if you was drest in never such poor duds, for to know well enough that you are not one of the common sort! No, no! take my word for it, that cock won't fight."

"I have already reflected on the objections you make to my design, (said Rosina.) You must say, that, when very young, I was taken and educated by a lady of fortune, but that I preferred retiring to a cottage with you, to living in a station of life to which I knew I was not entitled; and to say this, Austen, need not wound your conscience, for it is the plain and simple truth."

"Oh! as to the matter of his conscience, (Austen said,) it was not so very touchy as that came to. To be sure, he would not for twenty worlds tell a lie that could do any one any hurt, but, for a little fib of that kind, he did not think there was one bit of harm in it."

"Indeed, Austen, (said Rosina,) I think there can be no crime in your suffering me to pass for
your

your child, for I feel for you as if I were more than half your daughter."

"My daughter, indeed! (said Austin;) how should I come by the likes of you? Lord help me! there is some difference between such a poor grey-headed old creature as me, and your own noble father. If you had but seen him dressed out in his fine scarlet regimental cloaths, all laced with gold, and his sword by his side, it would have done your heart good!—And so you did often enough, for he used to carry you about in his arms, and was so fond of you, — but you do not remember him."

"No," said Rosina, putting her handkerchief to her eyes.

"Ah! it is so much the better for you, (said the old man, passing the sleeve of his coat across his eyes,) for many a time I have wished to forget him, and my dear lady too; but now it is all past and gone, I love to think of them sometimes, though it makes me sorrowful. To be sure, it must needs be a surprising thing for to see such a great warrior so mild and so tender hearted. I protest to you, miss, he would not so much as let
me

me shoot the mischievous little devils of black-birds, that used to keep eating his cherries ; and yet, I warrant you, he would think nothing of laying you ten or twelve Frenchmen as dead as herrings on the field of battle. But now, after all, miss, is it not very strange what delight people, that are so gentle and charitable, can find in hacking and hewing, and chopping one another to pieces after that unchristian-like manner !”

“ It is indeed, Austin, (said Rosina,) and it has often perplexed and astonished me.”

“ To think, (continued Austin,) that, because it was the will of God that I should be born in England instead of France, all the French king’s subjects must take it into their heads that I am their enemy, and feel such a desire to cut, and slash, and mangle me, as if I was worse than a Jew ! Sure it was not my fault ; I could not be born where I pleased ; though, to be sure, if I could, of all the places in the habitable world, England should be my country ! And now, miss, do not you feel very much rejoiced like, that you were born in England ?”

“ Indeed, Austin, (said Rosina,) if people are
good,

good, I think it matters not a jot in what country they are born."

"Why, I do not say it is any such great matter neither, (said Austen.) There is good and bad in all places, and, if I was to have my pick and choice, I would rather be a good Frenchman or Irishman, than a bad Englishman. Howsomever, all this is neither here nor there. If it is your will to pass for my daughter, why, be it for better or be it for worse, I will do every thing you would have me."

The truth was, Austen's vanity was a good deal tickled at the idea of Rosina's acknowledging him as a father.

"Then, pray, (said Rosina,) lay aside your misses and madams, and call me plain Rosy."

That Austen said he should find a hard matter ; but, in compliance with her commands, he would try his hand at it.

"And, when dinner is brought in, (continued Rosina,) instead of placing yourself behind my chair,

chair, as you used to do in Bristol, be so good as to take your seat at the foot of the table."

"I place myself at one table with the daughter of the noble Captain Mortimer! (cried Austin;) No, no! Say what you please, in any other shape, I should be proud to obey your commands, but that would be both a sin and a shame, and I never can consent to it."

The contention continued until the hostess made her appearance, with a roasted fowl on one dish, and some rashers and eggs, which Rosina had ordered in compliment to Austin, on another.

At Rosina's repeated instances, Austin at length seated himself at the table; but, whilst she was carving the fowl to help him, he burst into tears, started from the table, and flew out of the room. — This extreme sensibility affected Rosina, who thought it best, for the present at least, not to contend with his invincible modesty. She therefore eat her dinner, and, when she had done, requested the hostess to send some one in search of her father.

"Your father, miss! (said the woman staring.)

Lord

Lord, how will a body know where to find him !”

“ He cannot be far from the house, (said Rosina,) it is not a quarter of an hour since he left the room.”

“ What ! the old grey-headed man that went out just now !”

“ Yes,” said Rosina.

“ Lord, miss, sure it is not possible that he can be your father ?”

“ Why not ? (said Rosina.) A lady of fortune took me when I was an infant, and reared and educated me as if I had been her own daughter ; but, as I had no fortune, I did not think it right to live in so high a way, so I resolved to leave her, and come here with my father. My friend has been very bountiful to me, and given me as much money as will stock a little farm, if we can find one.”

“ And so you are no great lady then ?” cried Mrs. Jenkins.

“ No,

“ No, indeed, (said Rosina, smiling ;) and I desire for the future you will know me by the name of Rosina, the gardener’s daughter.”

“ Well, who could have thought it ! (said Mrs. Jenkins,) that a poor body’s child could be so polite and so high bred !”

She went out in search of Austin, whom she met returning to the house. He told her, that, just as he was sitting down to dinner with his daughter, something had come across him, and that for the life of him he could not get down one morsel.

“ Nothing but a qualm ! (cried Mrs. Jenkins,) wind in your stomach after your long journey. Come in, and eat your dinner, and you’ll find that a draught of my good ale will do you more good than a stomach cordial.”

The next morning Rosina set out, accompanied by Austin and a little girl, that Mrs. Jenkins sent with her as a guide to reconnoitre the cottage, of which there was some probability she might soon become the proprietor. A lively joy animated her bosom from the first moment she beheld
it

it rising on its green hill; all her vexations seemed to vanish, and she fancied no corroding anxiety could be the inhabitant of so sweet a retirement.

C H A P. XXIII.

THE NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

WHEN they reached the cottage, Rosina sent in the child to enquire how the sick man did. The girl not returning, Rosina approached the door of the cottage to call her, willing to avail herself of this pretext to view it on the inside. — A woman asked her to walk in, and she entered a sort of kitchen, where, amongst several other persons, she distinguished a poor old woman, who appeared to suffer the heaviest affliction. At intervals she sat silent, as if stupified by sorrow; then

then again burst into floods of tears, accompanied by violent exclamations, which, though spoken in Welch, were sufficiently intelligible to the feelings of Rosina. She enquired the occasion of the poor woman's affliction; the person to whom she addressed herself made no reply, but pointed to an inner room, where she beheld the dead body of an old man, laid out in the manner in which such spectacles are usually exhibited amongst the vulgar. Rosina was exceedingly shocked at this object, but her curiosity was at the same time strongly interested by the appearance of two men, who, without seeming to be in the least degree affected either by this dismal spectacle, or the melancholy lamentations of the poor mourner, ran about very busily from place to place, examining every thing, and seemed to be employed in taking an inventory of the furniture which the chamber of the deceased contained.

"Put down (said one of them to the other) three oak chairs, a table, a press, a feather bed, an oak bedstead."

"For what purpose are you taking this inventory?" said Rosina to one of the men, who now came from the inner room.

"For

“ For the purpose of getting them sold for the non-payment of rent, (replied the man furlily.) — Have you the account of the cattle and geer there?” turning to the other man.

Rosina, whose heart, unscared by communication with the world, retained all its natural glowing sensibility, shuddered at this inhuman unfeelingness. “ Good God ! (cried she,) how much is the money !”

“ Seventeen pounds, nine shillings, and twopence halfpenny, (said the same man, who had spoken before ; then, turning to his companion,) did you add the straddles and panniers to the amount of the geer ?”

“ And what is to become of this poor woman ? (said Rosina.) Is she to be turned out ?”

“ Let hur look to that, (cried the man who was writing, and who spoke in a Welch dialect ;) I often toul't the ted potty there within what hur would pring upon hurself, with her trinkĭng and hur cuzzling, and hur tancing and hur prancing after every ale-house and merry-meeting, iteling hur time away : put her was as tef as an atter,

and as blind as a peetle, so let hur aside py the loss, seeing that it is fitting that honest potties should haf their tues and their temants."

"And so (said Rosina) this poor woman is to be turned out, and all her effects sold?"

"Aye sure, (returned the Welchman,) that is the upshot of the matter."

Rosina, without any consciousness of the movement, took out her purse, and held it in her hand. It was full of gold. So unusual an object fixed the attention of every one present.

"But, (said Rosina,) if a person can be found to advance the money for her?"

The man, who spoke first, said that was a horse of another colour. To be sure, if she could raise the wind any how, so as to get the money to pay off the arrears of rent, it was nothing to them how she came by it. They did not come there to demand nothing that was not just and lawful, and, as soon as the money was forth coming, and his own fees paid him, he had nothing farther to say to the matter.

"Hur

"Hur has said what is right and chust, (rejoined the Welchman, who was the un pitying steward of as pityless a landlord;) hur is an honest shentleman, whose pusiness and occupations it is to go apout taking distrefs from the poor peoples:—and it is fitting hur should be pait for her trouple."

"Taking distrefs from the poor!" (said Rosina, to whom this phrase was entirely new,) rather loading them with it."

She twitching her elbow as she spoke, and, turning about, beheld Austin, who had followed her into the house. He begged her in a whisper to walk a little out with him, as he had something to say to her.

"Put up your purse, if you please, (continued he, as she followed him out of the house;) seeing it is not so fitting altogether for to let these folks about us know that one has so much money. I do not half like the looks of them, two hulking fellers!—and they seemed to cast such a sheep's eye at your purse, that a body would be afeard of their way-laying and robbing one, for I am sure they are bloody dogs."

“Your caution is very prudent, (said Rosina;) they are, indeed, sad wicked-looking wretches!”

“But this is not all that I wanted to say to you, (resumed Austin;) I would make bould,—be pleased to walk a little bit this way into the garden, that nobody may hear us,—I would make bould to speak a few words about this matter here in hand, in regard to the poor woman, and these fellers that are come to scize for the rent.”

“Well,” said Rosina.

“Why, to be sure, (continued Austin, with an air of some embarrassment,) charity is a great virtue, and a fine virtue, and covers a multitude of sins, as holy scripture tells us, and far be it from me to disparage it in any shape; but why, when people have no sins to be covered withal, they have the less need of it, that is a plain case; and, as for you, I am sure and sertain you are as innocent as the babe unborn, in a manner; and, now that you are standing on your own bottom, as it were, seventeen pounds, nine shillings, and two pence half-penny, is a deal of money for folks to give them that they know nothing at all about, especially when they have no great matters

to

to spare for themselves. It is a pitiful thing, there is no doubt on't, to see a poor old creature of a woman turned out of house and home, without so much as a bed to lie on ; but things of this kind will happen every day, in spite of our teeth, and it is twenty times worse, when a poor woman is left a widow, with five or six fatherless children at her heels."

"God help them !" said Rosina.

"Aye, God help them, indeed !" (resumed Austin ;) more shame for them that brings them to that, with their griping and grinding. One half of the world does not know how the t'other half of it lives ; and, if the landlord knowed how his poor tenants are squeezed and persecuted for to put dainties on his table, I have a notion they'd stick in his gizzard a little sometimes. It is a troublesome world, Lord help us ! and whoever lives longest will see most."

"Well, but what is to be done for this poor woman ?" said Rosina.

"Why, that is the very matter I want to speak about. To be sure, as I was saying, it is a fine thing

thing to be charitable ! I speak it under favour, for, seeing your money is your own, you may give it every penny to the man of the moon if you please, and who can gainsay you, or be your hindrance. But, begging your pardon, if you go on at this rate, relieving every unfortunate woman that has a tippling husband here in Wales, you will soon see the time that you will have nothing left for yourself ; for, though they may not have the whisky here to make them quite so furious and frantic, like as they are in Ireland, yet it comes to much the same thing in the end, if they keep muddling and stupifying themselves with their strong ale, and drying up their brains with their tobacco. This is not the first time I have been in Wales ; I know them well enough."

" And would you have me suffer this poor woman to be turned out to beggary !" said Rosina.

" No, no ! that is not the thing I am after at all, (said Austlin,) for you see if them devils once gets the poor soul's little matters into their clutches, they'll have them all sold off for a song, and ten to one but they'll have some of their own cronies waiting to buy them up for their own use, for I knows the tricks of them gentry as well as if I
was

was within side of them. Now I am a thinking, since this is such a pretty little patch of land, and a good garden too, only that it is so over-run with weeds, that it is a scandalous shame to see it, and that this house here, though to be sure it is but a poor mean place in comparison to any thing you have a right to ——."

"Believe me, Austin, (said Rosina,) I desire no better; with a little improvement I think it might be made a most enchanting residence."

"O then, (said Austin,) if it be a thing that you could bring yourself for to like to live in the like, I think I could contrive to make it pretty and snug enough; only, to be sure, the garden is in a most miserable pickle. O dear, O dear! what a lazy drunken swine that dead man there within must be, for to let such a sweet pretty spot run to rack and ruin after this filthy manner!"

"Well, (said Rosina,) he will do so no more, poor soul!"

"And the devil thank him for that, (replied Austin;) for how can he help himself? But, if he was alive again, I warrant you he'd be a dancing after

the old tune ; what's bred in the bone will never come out of the marrow. Of all the disorders in the world, drunkenness is the hardest to be cured."

" Well, but in respect to this poor woman," said Rosina.

" Why, my notion is, (replied Austin,) for you to advance the money for her for to pay these greedy devils withal, on condition that she will let you have a good bargain of this little place, which, for certain, she'll be right glad to do; seeing that, if there ben't goods enough on the premises to pay off the rent, they'll eject her for non-payment, and so get a hould of the lease, and then to be sure she comes to the loss of whatever little interest she has in it, and you may be choused out of a good pennyworth."

" At all events, (said Rosina,) the money must be advanced for this poor soul, and I leave the conduct of the affair to you, Austin, though I would rather she should get it without any condition."

" Well, God bless and reward you, (replied Austin;) you were always charitable and kind-

" But,

hearted, since you came out of the egg-shell. I do not say but what the woman may be a very honest woman, and a very great object; but, take my word for it, there is no hurt in keeping these sort of gentry under a body's thumb a little, until one sees what sort of metal they are made of: so, you see, if it is a thing that is agreeable to you, I will tell her you will advance the money for her on condition ——."

"But, dear Austin, (said Rosina,) be sure you make no hard bargain with this poor woman, for it would be cruel to take advantage of her distress. I would be sorry she should give the place to me a shilling cheaper than to any other person."

"Oh! never fear, (said Austin;) I warrant you the good woman will know how to butter her own bread well enough. These country folks, though they seem so innocent like, are as sharp as Spanish needles, and knows how to buy and sell their betters twenty times over. But, come, we had better go in, and try to get the house rid of them varmin of fellers, as soon as we can."

C H A P. XXIV.

THE NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

“**T**HIS is truly a sweet spot! (said Austin, looking around him as they approached the house,) and as pleasant a bit of ground for a garden as one would wish to see,—a sloping level in a fine South aspect. What a charming strawberry-bed one might plant here!—We might have green peas in the month of May. I’ll engage we should have neither blast nor blight.—And there is land enough to maintain three or four cows, besides a little for tillage and potatoes, and a body might keep a couple of goats upon the brow there.”

“ Yes,

“ Yes, (said Rosina;) I should like to have goats on that craggy precipice ; they would ornament it exceedingly ; they are beautiful animals, and the landscape seems incomplete without them. It is, indeed, a most enchanting spot, and I fervently wish we may be able to fix ourselves here.”

“ Well, so we will, (said Austin, with a cunning wink;) but leave the matter to me ; for, if they should see that you have any great hankering after it, they’ll raise up the rent at the devil’s own rate, and there would be no such thing as dealing with them.”

“ But, surely, (returned Rosina,) when those men are paid their demands, they will have no further occasion to interfere in the matter ?”

“ I am speaking of the old woman and her comrades,” said Austin.

“ What ! (said Rosina,) do you imagine she can be base enough to wish to impose on a person who thus generously interests herself in her favour ? Why should you suppose her to be such a monster of ingratitude ? I am rather afraid that the poor creature’s sensibility of my kindness may

induce her to let me have the house on lower terms than she can afford to do."

"Oh! never fear her for that, (cried Austin;) poor folks have their knavish tricks in them as well as other people. From your being so ready with your money, she'll think you are made of gold, and that it will be no sin to put her finger in your eye a little or so."

To those, who have been accustomed to wander only through the fairy labyrinths of imagination, and behold the world through a false and flattering medium, that cautious suspicion, the attendant of age and experience, assumes the aspect of a squint-eyed demon, that taints with its jaundiced hues the fairest objects of the creation. This unsuspecting openness of heart, the sweetest flowret of the human spring, the soft nurse of benevolence, and parent of divine philanthropy, never swayed a bosom that yielded with more implicit submission to its impressions, than that of Rosina. Austin's prudent caution, and knowledge of that part of human life which his humble station had afforded him an opportunity of observing, seemed to deprive him of some share in her estimation, whilst, in reality, it entitled him to a higher place

place in it. She was inclined to feel a very great degree of veneration for her aged guardian, and his strikingly reverend appearance seemed to heighten the prepossession. After the proof of generous attachment she had so recently received from him, she had almost persuaded herself that all his opinions must be liberal, all his sentiments heroic; but, since she had been in a great measure confined to his society, she could not avoid feeling some disgust, on perceiving that he had in many instances imbibed that contraction of thought which is inseparable from vulgar intercourse, and disappointed to find that the unassisted lights of nature will not communicate that liberal expansion of idea which is generally the result of superior intelligence.

“ But what matters it, (said she, apologizing to herself for the mental imperfections of her old friend,) though fortune has denied him the advantages of education; though science shed not her rays on his understanding, is not his breast illuminated with innate virtue, in comparison to which all other lights are but as the transitory and wandering meteors of the night? In a few years, perhaps a few months, (continued she, looking at his grey hairs,) when the veil that shrouds the

immortal spirit shall sink into the grave with all its blemishes and imperfections, — when the liberated soul rises on the wings of virtue to the glorious majesty of immortality, will the angels that await its arrival turn to pay homage to another guest,—the disembodied spirit of the lettered sage, whose lips proclaimed the pompous language of wisdom, whilst his heart disdained her laws?—Will it not then be seen, that virtue only is triumphant, — that all worship that is not offered at her shrine is a vain idolatry, — that the lights of science fade into extinction in her presence, and philosophy humbles her proud forehead to the dust?”

“I have been thinking, (said Austin, who had also been indulging himself in a reverie, whilst these ideas had glowed in the enthusiastic imagination of Rosina, and suffused her eyes with tears of tender rapture,) I have been thinking that one might keep a couple of pigs here very conveniently, in the little yard behind the house; a body might build a sty for a trifle, and, when they are well looked after, they are very profitable animals.”

This observation entirely put to flight the glories that seemed to radiate round the hoary locks

of Austin, and the angelic forms that seemed to hover with wreaths of immortal honour above his head. Rosina sighed, as if awakened from a trance. "How strange (said she) that a creature, who shall associate ere long with blessed angels, can think of pigs and pig-sties!"

By the time that Austin and Rosina returned to the house, the men had finished their inventory of the goods.

"And, pray, (said Austin,) if these goods, that you are so busy about, should not bring money enough to pay the rent, what will you do then?"

"Why, let the lease be answerable for the rest," said the man.

"Aye, I thought how it would be, (said Austin;) why, then, I can tell you, you might have saved yourselves all this trouble, for, sooner than let this poor woman's little matters go to rack and ruin in such a heathenish manner, I will advance the money for her myself, on proper conditions."

"You might have told us so before, (said the man furlily,) but any how I must be paid for my trouble."

"I don't know (said the Welch steward) what it is that can put it into hur head for to mettle and to make in a pissiness that hur has no concern in, seeing that hur is a stranger in those parts."

"That is my own affair, honest friend, (replied Austin;) every one is free to do what he will with his own."

"All that is ferry true, (replied the steward,) and no potty can gainsay it; put it would be perter for to let the law take hur course, and not to interrupt hur prokressions and hur operations."

"Yes, (said Austin,) I dare say it would be better for you; but the thing is, to be serviceable to the poor woman here."

Some of the people, who understood the import of Austin's words, having explained them by this time to the poor widow, she clasped her hands in a transport of joy, and uttered a thousand blessings, of which the persons to whom they were addressed understood not one syllable.

"But, (said Austin to the person who officiated as interpreter,) pray make her understand that I expect

I expect she will put the lease of the farm into my hands, by way of security for the money."

"And, pray, (added Rosina,) inform her that she may make herself perfectly easy in respect to the payment of it."

"Aye, (said Austin,) that is, we will give her time enough to settle all her affairs, and dispose of every thing she has to sell at the very best hand; make her very sensible of that."

Rosina, though not much satisfied at having the generosity of her intention thus explained away, suffered Austin to have his own way.

The interpreter said that was all the favour the woman demanded, as she had friends who would have supplied her with the money, if she had been allowed time to inform them of her situation, but that the steward had refused to defer the business one single hour.

"Aye, (said Austin, with a wink,) he know'd his own know for that, I warrant him. But, you see, I will just step home, and ax my friend and landlady, Mrs. Jenkins's advice, for there is no good

good in running hand over head, and doing things rashly. Howsomever, if the thing be as I am tould it, let the woman come down to me this evening, not forgetting to bring the lease of the farm with her, and I will have the money ready for her, for the sooner she gets rid of her crooked companions the better."

"And pray who is it, (said the little Welsh steward, strutting up to Austin with an air of mingled spite and defiance, whilst his colleague stood muttering in a corner,) and pray who is it that you have the impudence to call crooked companions?"

"Them that surely well deserve the name, (retorted Austin,) and a great many worse ones tacked to the end of it."

"If hur had hur deserts, (cried the steward, in a still greater passion,) hur would haf every pone in hur oult potty proken for her impertinence, coming thrusting hur nose into other potty's pissiness."

"And, if you had your deserts, (returned Austin, very calmly,) you would not be here to tell me so; for it is my firm belief and opinion, that you would have been hanged long ago."

This

- This reply threw the Cambro-Briton into such a paroxysm of rage, that, not having a sufficient command of the English language, he was obliged to have recourse to his native tongue, to give vent to the ebullitions of his fury.

“ A body would think you were possessed with a devil, (said Austin,) though, in troth, nobody could accuse it of being a dumb one. Howsoever, I would have you for to keep your spluttering and your muttering, and your grumbling and your growling for them that understands or regards it.”

- This affray, which might been attended with more serious consequences, was interrupted by the appearance of a pleasing and genteel-looking young man, whom, from his dress, Rosina judged to be a clergyman. He seemed much surpris'd at finding a person of her figure in such a place; for, spite of the studied plainness of her dress, Rosina could not divest herself of that air of elegance and dignity, which, to an eye of the least discernment, instantly pointed out the superiority of her rank.

CHAP. XXV.THE NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

Still in his duty prompt at every call,
He watch'd and wept, he pray'd and felt, for all.

GOLDSMITH.

THE village pastor, for he it was, that parson Lewis who has been already mentioned, politely saluting Rosina as he passed her by, approached the disconsolate widow ; and, though the words he addressed to her were unintelligible to Rosina, and the sound of the language they were spoken in very ill calculated to convey any affecting ideas, they seemed to receive pathos from the gentleness of his manners and the flexibility of his voice. — Austin beckoned her away, but she felt her attention strongly attracted by the young pastor, and twice as she approached the door, she turned back to listen to and to look at him ; she wished too to understand his words, for she felt a conviction that they were no less sensible than pious.

“ I

"I am thinking (said Austin, as he walked homewards with Rosina) that this lease, if they should bring it to us, may'nt signify the value of a rap farthing, in regard to securing your money to you; for, if the man made no will, his little property, whatever it is, will be divided between his wife and children, half and half I believe. And, if he has made a will, he may have left it to the man of the moon, for aught we can tell, you know."

"At all events, (said Rosina,) the woman's goods shall not be sold by those harpies."

"Well, well, (said Austin,) we shall see what's to be done for her."

On their return, they acquainted Mrs. Jenkins with their proceedings, and were informed by her that Mr. Lewis had told her that he had persuaded the deceased to make a will entirely in favour of his wife. "And he has left her no great matters after all, (continued Mrs. Jenkins,) for the little farm will be out of lease in three or four years; he might have got a renewal in the old landlord's life-time, but he was such a drunken brute, that he would never do no good, neither for himself nor for nobody else."

"Then,

"Then, may be, he may have other debts, (replied Austin,) that may come down flap upon us when we least look for them."

"No, that he has not, (said Mrs. Jenkins,) for nobody would trust him the value of a halfpenny, and how can folks get into debt that has nobody to give them credit?"

"That is a plain case," said Austin.

"The old landlord used to have mercy on him out of compassion to his wife, (continued Mrs. Jenkins;) but times are sadly altered with the tenants now-a-days, for the young master does not trouble his head about nothing, but leaves every thing to a rogue of a steward that he keeps, and he squeezes them to the very last farthing: he would suck the very marrow out of their bones, if he could."

"Detestable monster!" exclaimed Rosina.

"Aye, (said Austin,) he thought to make a good milch cow of our poor woman; but we'll be too many for him thereabouts. I think I warrant you that fellow has feathered his own nest well."

"Aye,

“Aye, and that he has!” returned Mrs. Jenkins.

In the evening, the widow and her friends came to Mrs. Jenkins's, according to appointment. — Mrs. Jenkins served as interpreter to Austin, and, after a good deal of higgling, it was agreed that Rosina should pay the woman five and twenty guineas for her interest in the lease of the farm, which contained about twelve acres of land, subject to the yearly rent of nineteen pounds. Rosina, afraid she had got too good a bargain, privately gave the woman two guineas more, though, to every one else, her purchase appeared to be a very dear one, and Austin was not half content with it. The woman also agreed to sell them any of her moveables that they might have occasion for at a reasonable valuation. Every thing was facilitated by the friendly interference of Mrs. Jenkins, and, in a fortnight, Rosina found herself in possession of her new habitation.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVI.

THE NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

Hail, Independence, hail! Heav'n's next best gift
To that of life, and an immortal soul!
The life of life! that to the banquet high
And sober meal gives taste; to the bow'd roof
Fair-dream'd repose, and to the cottage charms.

THOMSON.

A Keener glow of exultation never warmed the bosom of an ambitious conqueror, on the acquisition of a new territory, than that which throbbed in the breast of Rosina when she beheld herself mistress of this little dominion. She snatched up a pen, and thus-expressed the effusions of her heart in a letter to Mrs. Fitzosborne.

"I am happy, my friend! your Rosina is happy! Like a bird escaped from its cage, I seem to flit through æther; like a slave who has cast aside his fetters, my soul exults in its liberation!

“O you! who alone possess the magic power of converting the chain of dependence into a flowery wreath, think not my heart ever formed one mean and selfish wish to throw off those delightful bonds which friendship and gratitude have rivetted round my heart,—bonds close twisted with its fibres, and indissoluble but by death.

“Imagination annihilates the distance that separates us. You are for ever present to my solitary musings. Ah! why must these strong delusions of the fancy supply the place of the reality? why was I necessitated to leave you!

“O independence, thou gem invaluable! first object of the aspirations of the noble mind, dear solace of my pensive hours, sweet enlivener of this solitary cottage! can I too highly prize a blessing for which I have paid so dear a price!”

Rosina had written a line from Bristol, to assure her friend of her welfare and safety. Her letters were inclosed, under cover, to Austin's friend, Solomon, who had directions to have them put into the general post-office in Dublin, which would effectually prevent their throwing any light on the place of her concealment.

While

Whilst workmen were employed in putting the inside of the cottage into very neat repair, under the superintendence of the good Mrs. Jenkins, whose affection for Rosina every hour seemed to increase, Austin was busily engaged in clearing away the weeds, which his predecessor, though a gardener too by profession, had suffered to increase and multiply without molestation.

“Fie upon it, fie upon it ! (said Austin,) how could a man that had a soul to be saved suffer it to lie upon his conscience to let so sweet a spot run to waste after such a manner ! Aye, indeed, it is the garden of the sluggard in good earnest.

“I went into his garden, and saw the wild briar, The thorn and the thistle, grow higher and higher.”

“See what a bunch of nettles is here ! and that great thicket of brambles, how they must have stared him in the face every time he opened the garden-gate, and pricked and stung the heart of him, if he had any feeling in it ! But what do I talk of feeling ! When people take to tippling, a body would think that the liquor they are so fond of guzzling down washes away every good seed in its passage, and leaves nothing behind it but briars and brambles, as one may say.”

